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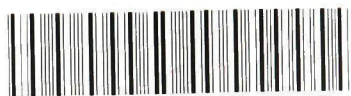
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Sketches of Old Rockhampton

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Sketches by Edith Neish

Text by Lorna McDonald



University of Queensland Press

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Introduction

A vigorous and growing area such as ours must preserve its historic heritage and pass it on to succeeding generations. This heritage tells the story of Rockhampton's growth, trials, accomplishments and goals. It provides the key to understanding the present and planning wisely for the future. How well we safeguard and interpret this priceless legacy will determine the character and quality of this district in the future.

Sketches of Old Rockhampton is destined to play its part in engendering a greater awareness and appreciation for it comes from the pens of two people who have a long standing dedication to the conservation of all aspects of the history of Rockhampton and district.

As foundation chairman in 1973 of the Rockhampton Branch of The National Trust I appreciated the opportunity to bring us all together, and form a base for developing a wider public appreciation of this district's unique heritage. The dramatic change in local attitudes is in part a measure of the work of the Trust.

Nevertheless, these attitudes have not changed so dramatically as to ensure the conservation of Rockhampton's character; important buildings and environments are put under threat and too many people still cling to the old notion that progress consists of knocking things down.

On the other hand, it is heartening to note that many owners of buildings shown in the sketches have instigated significant conservation action, and the monuments shall remain as much a part of our heritage as a memorial to their initiative and understanding.

The pleasure of this book represents part of Rockhampton's soul and foundation and will give to its readers an expression of historical presence, vital to our sense of continuity between yesterday and today.

Ian McDonald
Rockhampton
Vice-President
The National Trust of Queensland



GRACEMERE HOMESTEAD

Edith Neish

Gracemere Homestead

Gracemere Homestead is sometimes referred to as “the cradle of Rockhampton” because it nurtured the city which was founded nearby. Charles and William Archer, the two pastoralist-explorers who discovered and named the Fitzroy River in 1853, took up a grazing property on adjacent country. They planned to establish their head station beside a lake which they originally named Farris, but later changed to Gracemere as a compliment to their brother Tom’s bride, Grace. In a letter to his father, Charles described the locality as a beautiful place in any country, but to his partial eyes “a perfect paradise”.

Two years later the brothers overlanded their stock from Eidsvold to Gracemere and so became the first Europeans to settle on the Fitzroy River. They had looked forward for years to building a substantial homestead where they could “live like Scottish gentlemen”. It was to be built on the peninsula which juts out into the lake, with the garden landscaped down to the water’s edge. The building was designed by Charles’ younger brother, Colin, who later became the distinguished naval architect who built the *Fram* for Nansen, the ship which also carried Amundsen to the Antarctic. The exterior walls of the homestead are of adzed iron-bark slabs with interior walls of native plum, all obtained on Gracemere; in order to combat white ants New Zealand pine was imported for the flooring. On 19 July 1858 Colin wrote in his journal: “Having finished bricking the chimney of the new house, we have taken possession and find it very comfortable and roomy after the old place which is now Bachelors’ Hall.”

Gracemere Homestead, loved by succeeding generations of the Archer family, has an atmosphere and character which only the passing years and family heritage can give to a house. The garden remains “a perfect paradise” with its tree-shaded walks and masses of rich and varied bougainvillea, while the stone terraces are an enduring memorial to the craftsmen of last century. The lake which laps the garden was once a favourite fishing place for the Aborigines of the Darambal tribe, and now it is a sanctuary for native birds. The whole environment is one of tranquil beauty.



SAINT PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

Saint Paul's Cathedral

Rockhampton was proclaimed a “town or village” late in 1858 and in the following year members of all Protestant denominations united to provide a building for public worship—a simple slab structure with shingled roof, erected on the block where Saint Paul's Cathedral now stands. During the week it was used as a schoolroom and on Sundays William Brown, a Presbyterian, read Church of England services. When Bishop Tufnell later visited Rockhampton and found the newly arrived Presbyterian minister conducting services in the building, he challenged his right to do so and the matter had not been resolved when the bishop boarded his vessel for departure. Later, Captain R. M. Hunter went on board to inform his Lordship that nature had decided the issue; a fierce storm which passed over the township that afternoon had completely demolished the church.

When the Reverend Thomas Jones arrived shortly afterwards to become the first rector, services were held in a large room over Grant's Timber Yard in East Street until a church could be erected. The first Saint Paul's Church, on the site of the present Parish Hall, was opened in 1862 but the simple timber building was soon inadequate for the growing congregation. By 1874 the walls of the new Stanwell freestone church had reached a height of one metre, but remained at that stage for several years owing to a quarrel about finance. This was eventually resolved under the leadership of the Reverend W. A. Diggins and on 16 September 1879 the cornerstone was laid. In 1883, the year of its consecration, the original pipe organ was installed after being salvaged from the wreck of the sailing ship *Deutschland* on Polmaise Reef. It provided the music in Saint Paul's until 1966.

The church became Saint Paul's Cathedral when the Right Reverend Nathaniel Dawes was enthroned as bishop in 1892. The huge diocese, four times the size of England and Wales, must have presented a formidable task to the pioneer bishop. Saint Paul's is an integral part of its environment. It is unchanged externally, but some interior alterations have been made and more than twenty stained-glass windows installed. A free-standing bell tower, with eight bells, was erected as a thanksgiving for peace and a memorial to those who served and suffered in the second World War. The cathedral itself is an enduring memorial to the spiritual aspirations of pioneer townsmen, including those who built Rockhampton's first place of worship on the site in 1859.

The Rocks and Berserker Range

Rockhampton is one of the few place-names in Australia which has both a direct and symbolic relationship to a particular feature of its environment. In 1856, just one year after Charles Archer brought the first stock to the district, the government asked Land Commissioner William Henry Wiseman to find a suitable site on the Fitzroy River for a township. In consultation with Archer, Wiseman decided that as the bar of rocks across the river had already fixed the head of navigation, this was the natural site. He chose the chief geographical feature, "Rock", and added "Hampton", commonly attached to a specific prefix to identify an English town. One meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word "Ham" is "the home of all the settlers in a well defined locality" (town), while early associations of "Ham" in compounds imply the presence of water. A literal interpretation of "Rockhampton" is therefore "town near the rocks in the river".

Wiseman also built the first private home within the present city boundaries and called it Mount Athelstane. It was situated on the southern end of the Range overlooking Yeppen Lagoon and he was already living there at the time of the Canoona Rush in 1858. All that remains today of the large house is the stone building known as Wiseman's Cottage, completed in 1859. This has taken on a new role recently as a handcraft and speciality gift shop.

The Berserker Range received its name three years before Rockhampton. When Charles and William Archer looked towards the coast on that clear May day in 1853 and saw the brooding range beyond the Fitzroy, they were apparently reminded of their adopted homeland, Norway. In naming the range



WISEMAN'S COTTAGE

“Berserker” they commemorated the legendary Norse warrior who, in rage, always tore his tunic off before going into battle. Rockhampton’s characteristic independence is perhaps influenced by the spirit of the warrior whose name lives on in the Berserker Range.

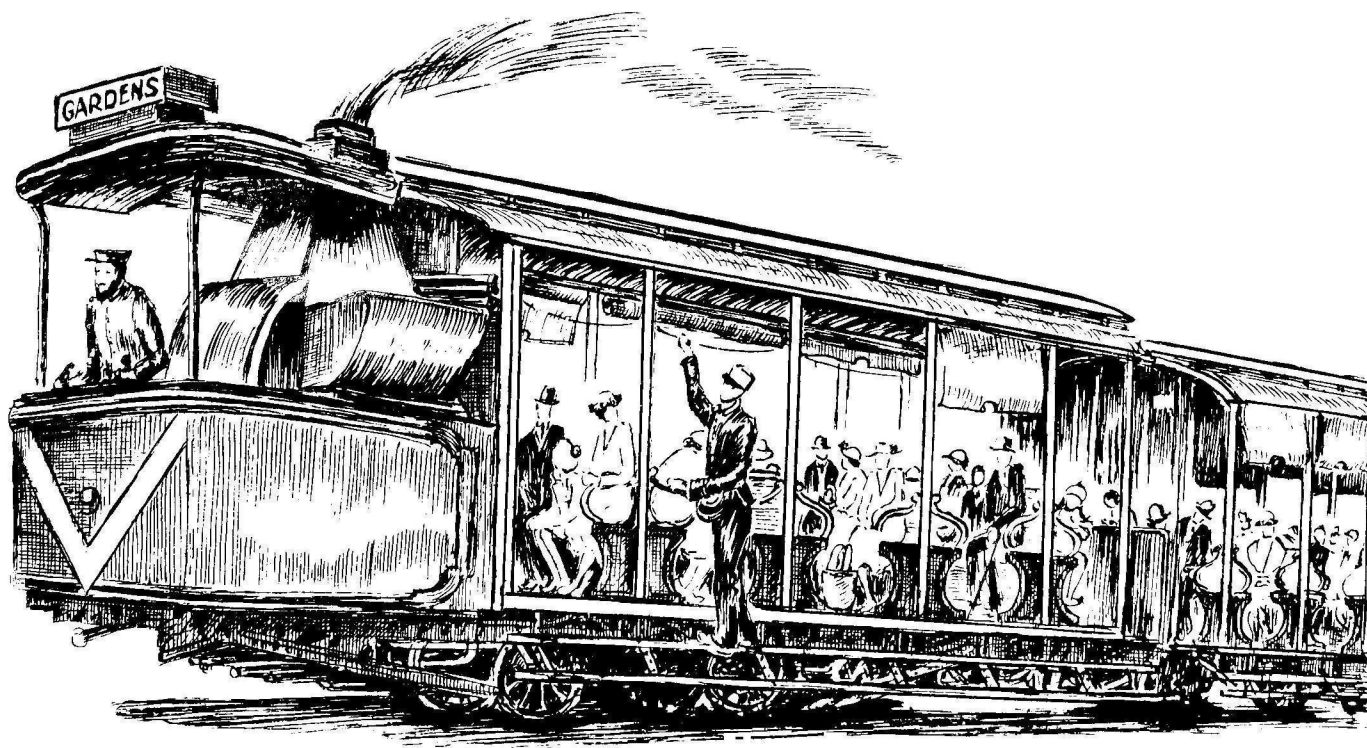


Edith Nesh

Botanic Gardens

There were men of vision among Rockhampton's early civic fathers who, in 1870, succeeded in having the former Native Police paddock on the Athelstane Range gazetted as a reserve for Botanical Gardens. On the chosen site of thirty-nine hectares nature had already provided a pleasant setting of gently sloping land on the shores of Murray Lagoon with its many aquatic birds. Even so, the ubiquitous *Pro Bono Publico* complained that it was too remote ever to be popular (four kilometres from the GPO), while the alternate site opposite the Rocks could easily be reached by ferry. Murray Lagoon had certainly been remote enough during the 1860s to be used as a gentlemen's nude bathing pool, complete with imported sandy beach and diving pontoon.

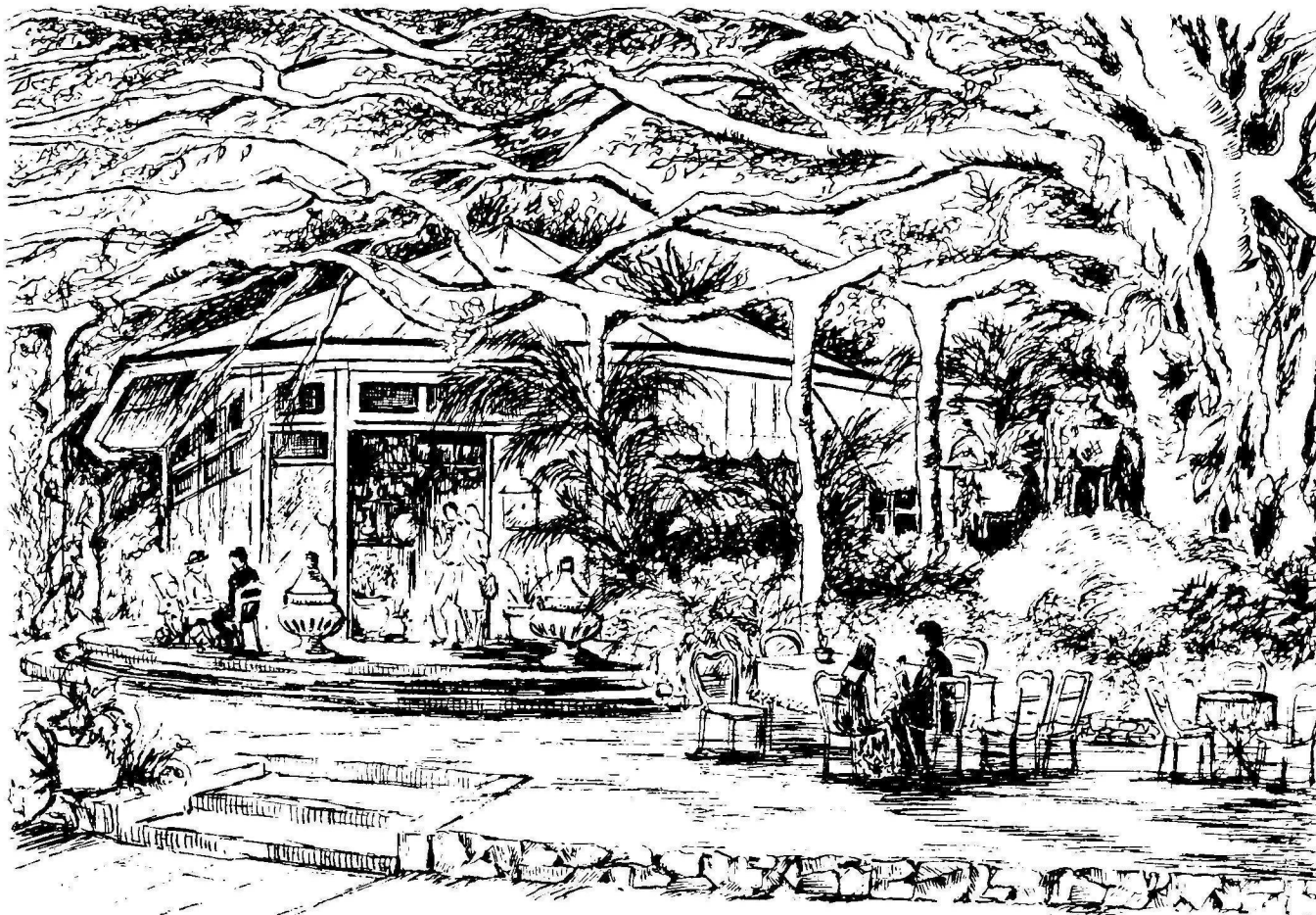
With the appointment of G. S. Edgar as first Curator of the Gardens in 1873, there began a remarkable record of service in which he and his two successors, R. and H. G. Simmons (father and son) served for an unbroken eighty-four years. Edgar had received part of his training in the North Rockhampton experimental gardens of Monsieur Anthelme Thozet, a skilled botanist and colleague of Baron von Mueller. It was through these two non-British immigrants that seeds of many exotic trees were planted in the Gardens. Among the many magnificent shade and flowering trees, outstanding specimens include the enormous Banyan Fig (*Ficus benghalensis*) which now completely embraces the kiosk built in 1911.

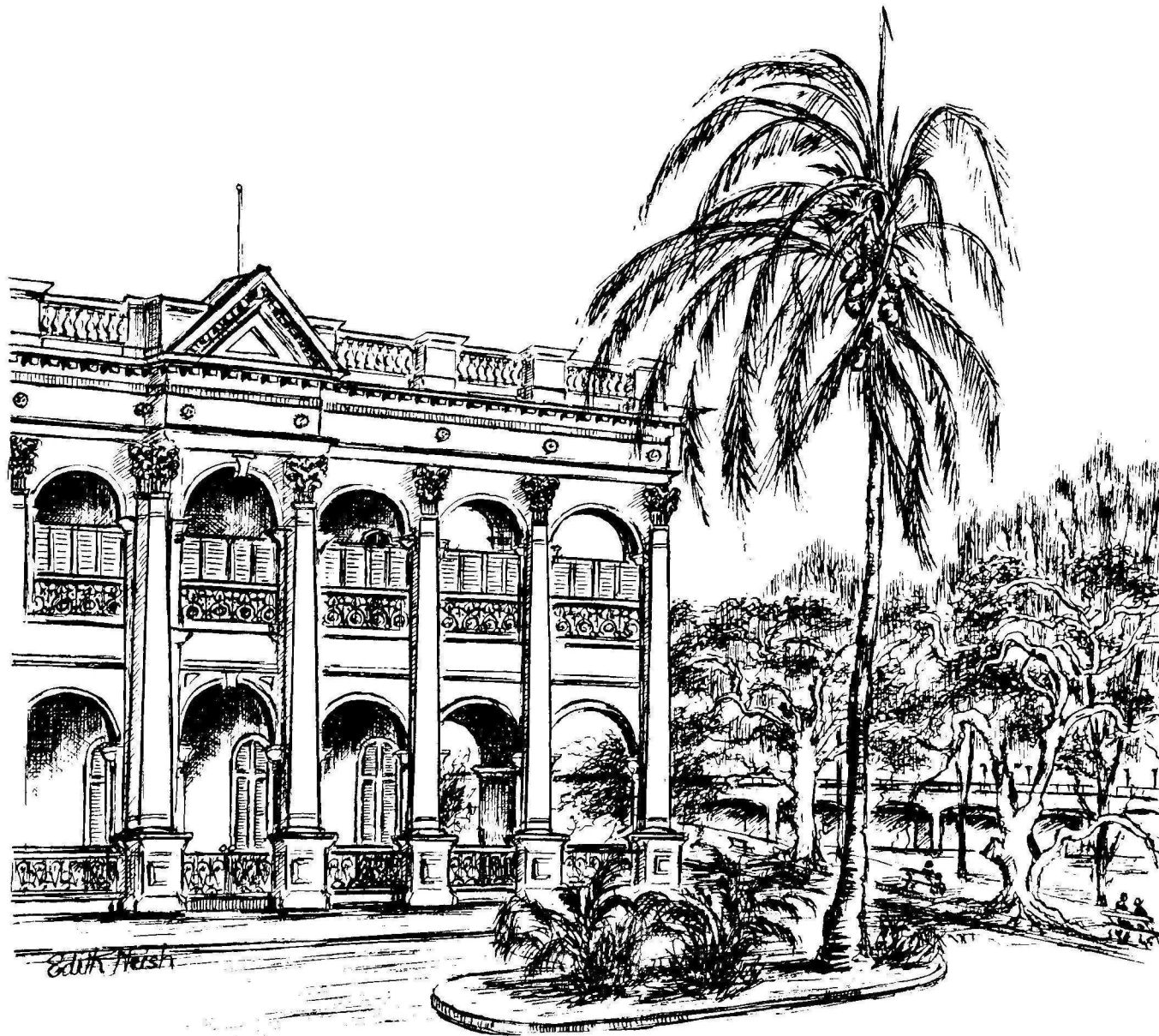


In the sequestered shade of this massive tree, wedding ceremonies are sometimes held. There is also a Fetish tree (*Kigelia pinnata*) from tropical West Africa which has grotesque sausage-like seed cases, and a Silk Cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*) from Southeast Asia. In the late winter this huge tree is covered with fleshy, lotus-like blossoms whose nectar attracts flocks of brightly-coloured screeching parrots.

In the days before public transport people continued to echo the complaint that the Gardens were too remote. The problem was solved in 1909 with the introduction of steam trams (Purrey cars) which were specially built in France. Affectionately known as “pie carts”, these trams served the city’s needs until 1939 when they were replaced by mundane motor buses.

Gardens, unlike buildings, are constantly changing and so provide fresh delights on successive visits. In the Rockhampton Botanic Gardens, man and nature in rare harmony have created a place of renowned beauty and tranquillity.





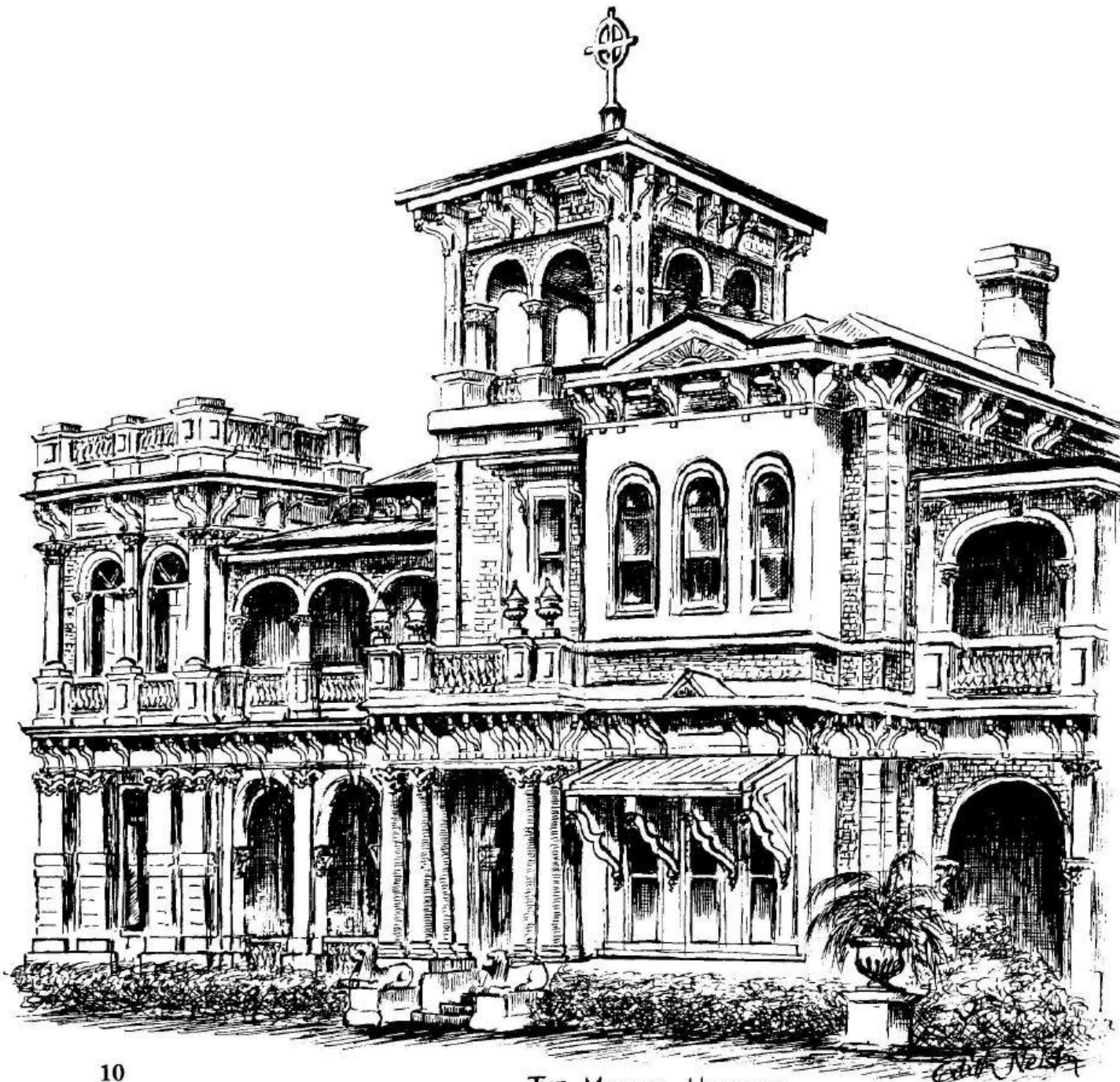
Rees R. & Sydney Jones

The old bank building which has stood at the corner of Quay and Denham Streets since 1880 has firm historical associations with Rockhampton, first through commerce and more recently through the legal profession. Until 1976 it was owned and occupied by the Queensland National Bank; it was then bought by Rockhampton's (and Queensland's) oldest practising legal firm, Rees R. & Sydney Jones. Although many of the fine buildings in the locality had their origins either directly or indirectly in Mount Morgan wealth, this bank pre-dated the official discovery of the mountain of gold by two years. It was designed by the distinguished architect, F. D. G. Stanley, and was modestly described by the *Bulletin* at the time of its opening as "a handsome structure". Adapted to the climate with verandahs and balconies shaded by high arches, the banking chambers were at street level with the manager's residence above. Unobtrusive wrought-iron railings and screens help counteract the glare of bright tropical sunlight, while the riverbank avenue of trees planted by Monsieur Thozet in 1867 provides a pleasing background.

Rees R. & Sydney Jones acquired the building in June 1976 when the bank moved to new premises in East Street. Rees Rutland Jones, a graduate of Sydney University, had come to Rockhampton in 1864 to practise his profession and throughout his long life was closely associated with the civic, political, and social life of the town. He married a daughter of William John Brown ("Brown the Magnificent"), Sub-collector of Customs, and brought up a large family. His firm built and occupied the plain single-storey building at 178 Quay Street from 1886 to 1976, and thus has a long association with the waterfront area. It is most appropriate that the old bank building, for so long a significant commercial establishment in the town, should become the property of a local professional firm founded in 1864.

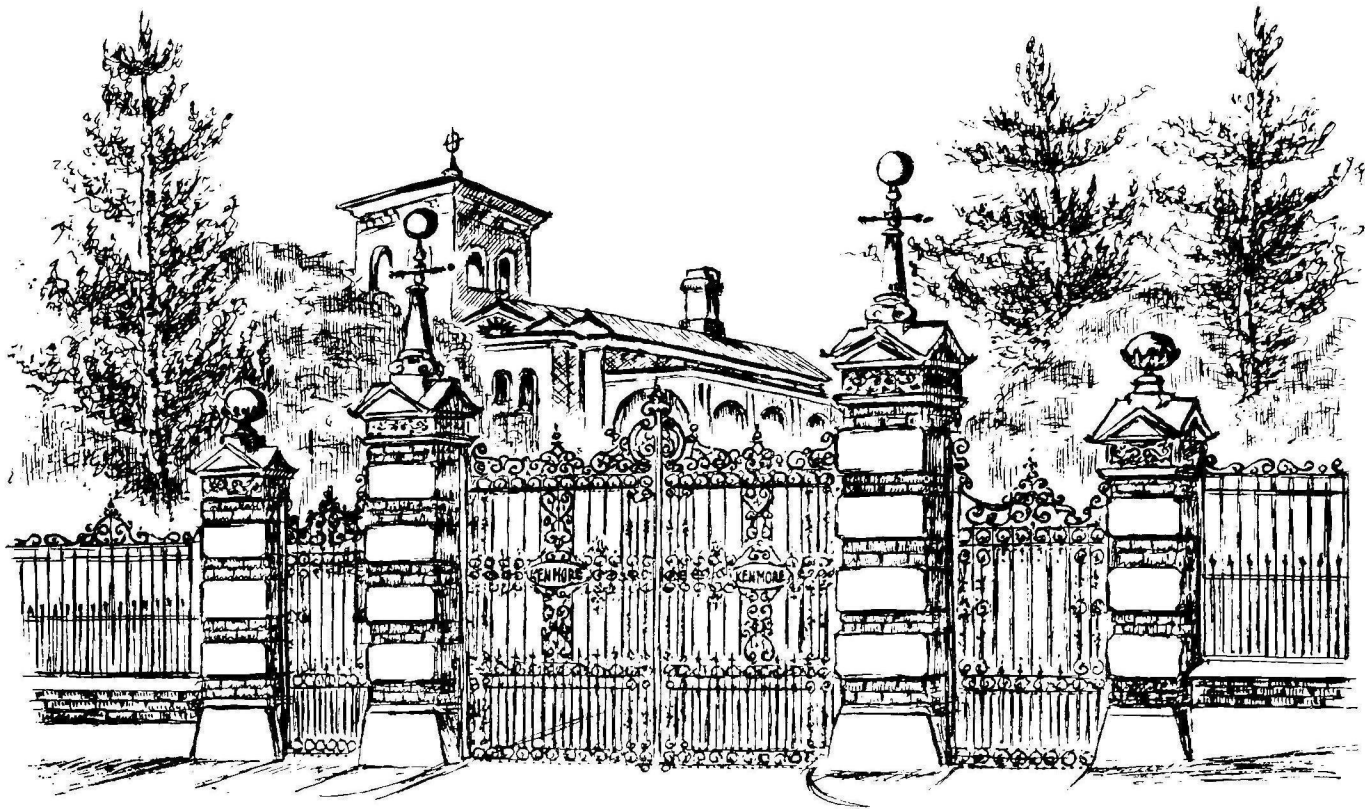
Mater Hospital

The grandest private home ever constructed in Rockhampton was Kenmore, now the Mater Hospital. It was designed by James Flint for the Honourable John Ferguson, a successful building contractor who was also one of the fortunate eight original shareholders in the Mount Morgan Mine. If the very strong Separation Movement of the 1890s had succeeded (as it almost did), it is probable that Kenmore would have become Government House and John Ferguson first Governor of Central Queensland.



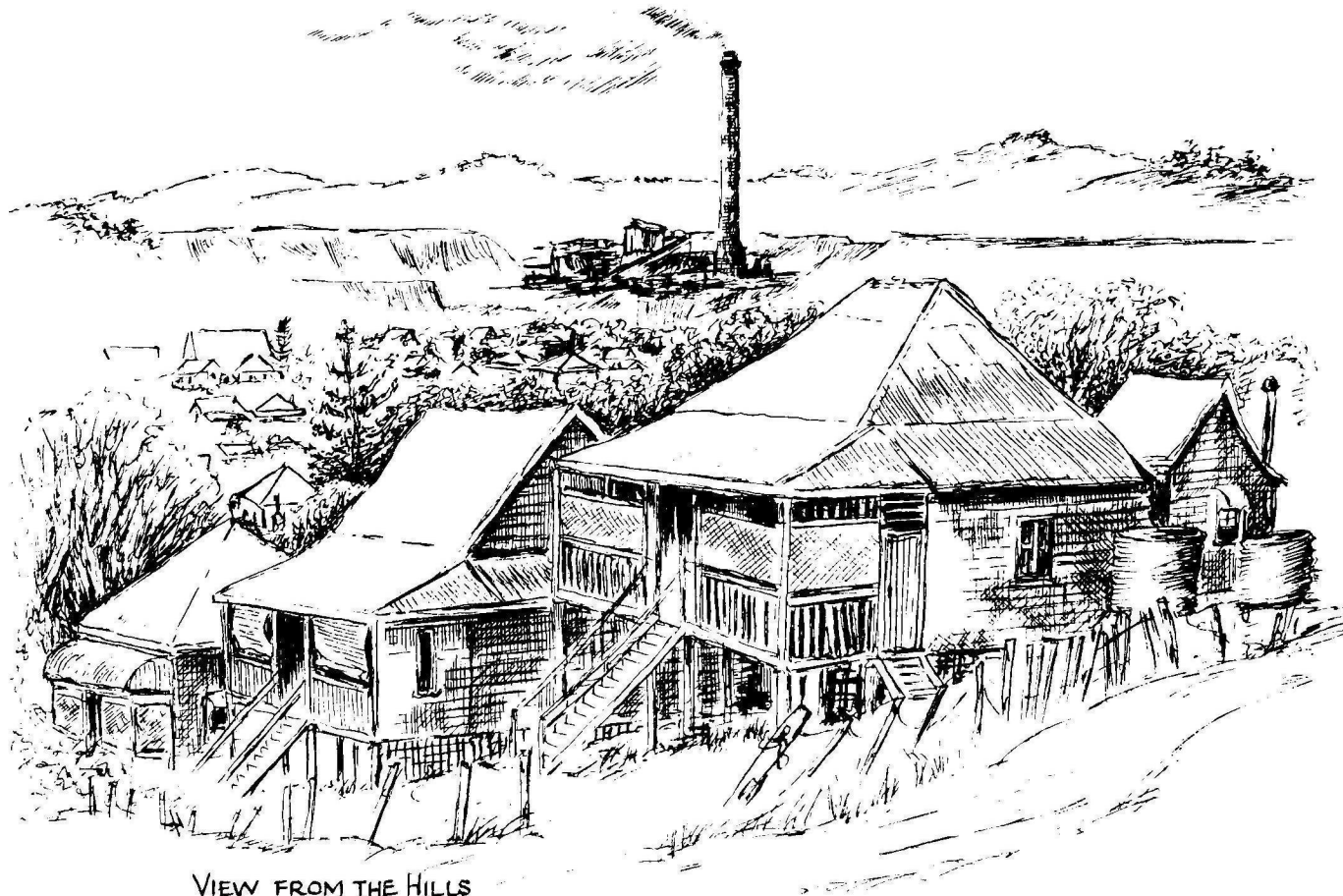
The never-to-be Government House was built on classic lines, now sometimes alluded to as “Victorian boom style”. A flight of marble steps, sheltered by a stone portico, provides entry through a marble-tiled vestibule to a huge central hall, undoubtedly planned as a stateroom. A magnificent cedar staircase with carved balustrades leads to the upper floor. In August 1894 tenders were called for two sets of “Grand Entrance Gates” in stone and wrought iron to complete the mansion which, in many respects, was unequalled in Queensland.

After Ferguson’s retirement, Kenmore was bought by Stuart MacDonald, son of pioneer pastoralist-explorer, P. F. MacDonald. Finding it too large for a private home, he sold it in 1915 to the Sisters of Mercy who easily adapted it to hospital requirements. The ballroom became a four-bed ward, the billiard room a chapel, and the bedrooms wards. Over the years, new buildings have been added to make the Mater an up-to-date and efficient hospital. The thousands of patients who have received the special nursing care for which the Mater is famous, no doubt give thanks that Kenmore did not become Government House, while the Sisters of Mercy believe it was destined by God to be a hospital.



Mount Morgan Mine

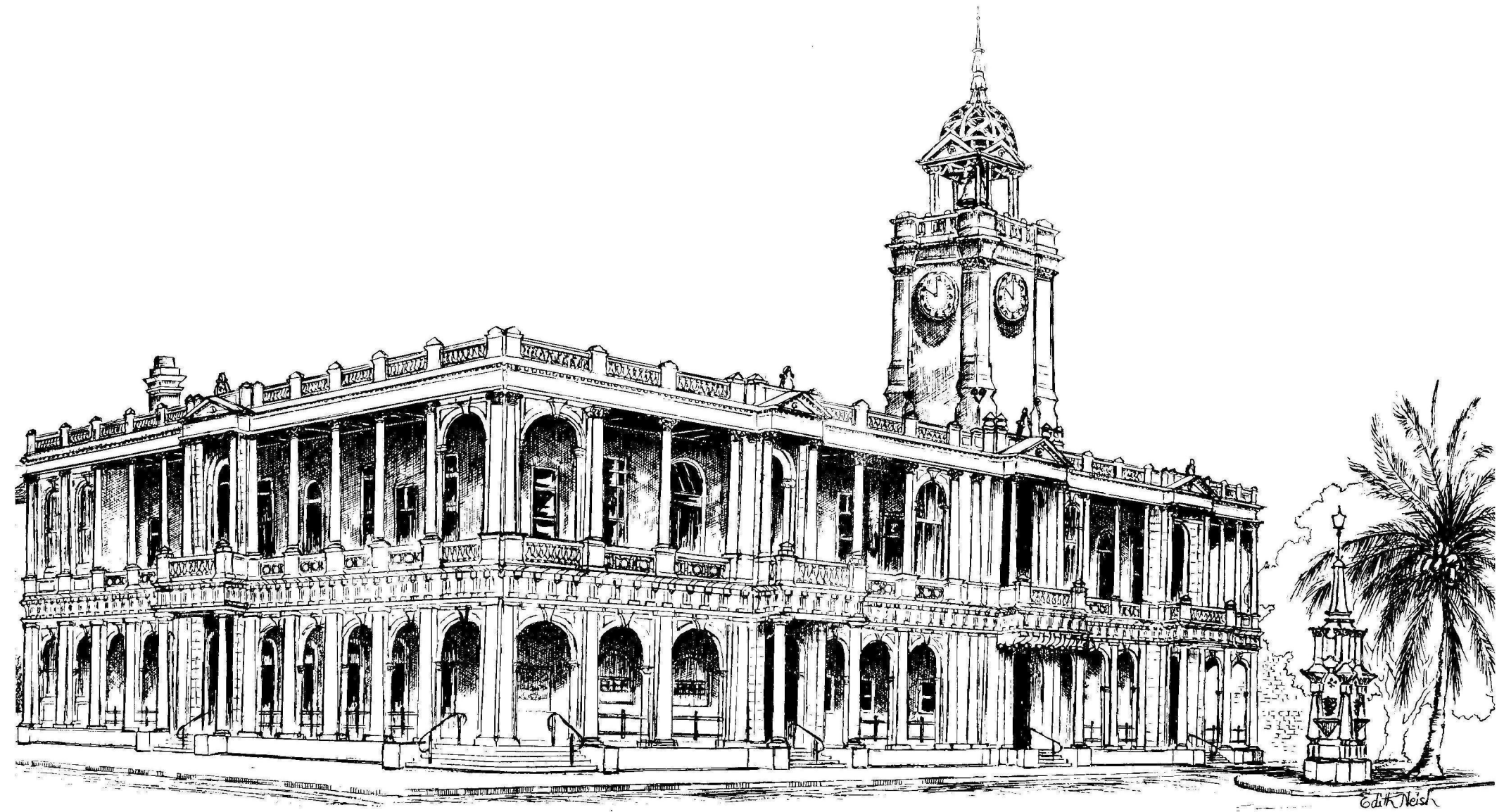
The Morgan brothers who gave their family name in 1882 to a feature formerly known as Ironstone Mountain, thirty-eight kilometres south-west of Rockhampton, did not dream that in a few years it would become famous as the greatest and richest gold mine in the world. They sold their shares to their fortunate partners, Thomas Hall, Walter Hall, William Pattison and Knox D'Arcy who in 1886 floated the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited. Within seventeen years, eighty tonnes of refined gold had been taken from the justly named "Mountain of Gold". From the early years of the twentieth century the mine produced decreasing amounts of gold, but it also became a rich copper mine. It was Mount Morgan gold which financed Knox D'Arcy's Persian oil search in the early years of this century, and which ultimately gave the British Navy its advantage over Germany in the First World War. Mount Morgan gold also provided the funds for the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne.





The old company went into voluntary liquidation in 1927 and Mount Morgan Limited was floated two years later. Adam Boyd, manager first of the old company and then the new, believed that open-cut mining would be economically feasible and he was proved correct. Peko Wallsend acquired the mine in 1968 and is still mining it on a limited scale twelve years later. Both these companies have wisely refrained from modernizing the fine office block built by the old company in 1902. The local brick in warm earthy tones is pleasantly shaded on all sides by wide verandahs, while the spacious rooms and solid office fittings suggest a more leisurely age in business. In 1913, as part of an economy plan, Mount Morgan became the registered office in place of Rockhampton. A striking landmark at the mine, still in use, is the big chimney stack built in 1905 and banded for added strength four years later.

Mount Morgan town has always had a close relationship with the mine and its management, and four generations of some families have worked there. The grandfathers of today's miners, described in 1887 as looking like Red Indians because of the fine red dust which poured out of the old works, introduced the custom of "running the cutter" at crib times to obtain billies of beer to soothe their dusty throats. Today's miners drive their cars to the pub after work, but it is doubtful if their beer tastes as good as it did to the thirsty old-timers.



Post Office and Hartley Memorial

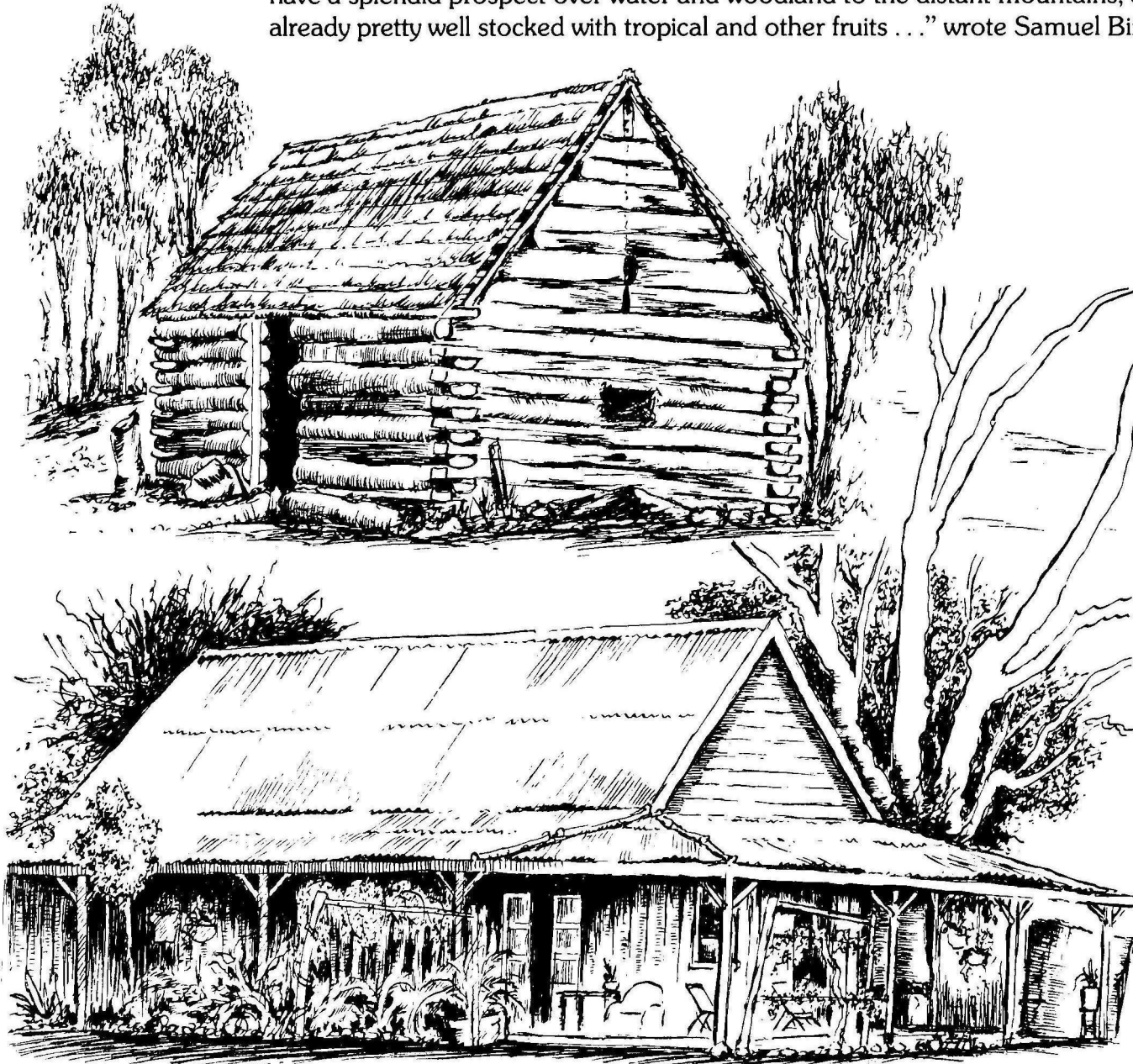
Although Rockhampton received its name in 1856, it was the Canoona gold rush in 1858 which provided an instant population. An unofficial post office was set up in Mansfield's store in Quay Lane to serve the new community, but in 1861 was relocated in Rutherford's chemist shop at the corner of Quay and Denham Streets. A fortnightly mail-steamer service from Brisbane had been introduced the previous year. John Smith was appointed first official postmaster in 1863 and two years later a two-storey brick post office, well suited to the climate, was erected on the site of the present building at the corner of East and Denham Streets. A tower was added in 1873 and also a flagstaff to signal shipping arrivals in Keppel Bay. The telegraph had reached Rockhampton in 1865 and was extended to Curtis Island (Keppel Bay) in 1867. Even though the post office had a clock, Rockhampton standard time was announced each day (since 1865) by the firing of a time gun at one o'clock. The *Morning Bulletin* commented in April 1882 that the post office clock was about ten minutes behind the time gun and that government officials should understand "that we in Rockhampton do not take our time from Brisbane".

The present post office was constructed in 1892 at a cost of £17,500 (\$35,000). Built of local Stanwell freestone, its solid architectural style is adapted to the tropics by wide, arched verandahs and colonnaded balconies. Ornamental stone work concealing the roof line and the clock tower rising above the main entrance relieve the oblong shape of the structure. The original plan allowed for stone railings and balustrades, but for reasons of economy these were modified to include some iron panels.

In 1893 a citizens' committee received reluctant permission to erect a drinking fountain of Stanwell stone in front of the post office as a memorial to pioneer Methodist clergyman and temperance advocate, Robert Hartley.

Old Glenmore Homestead

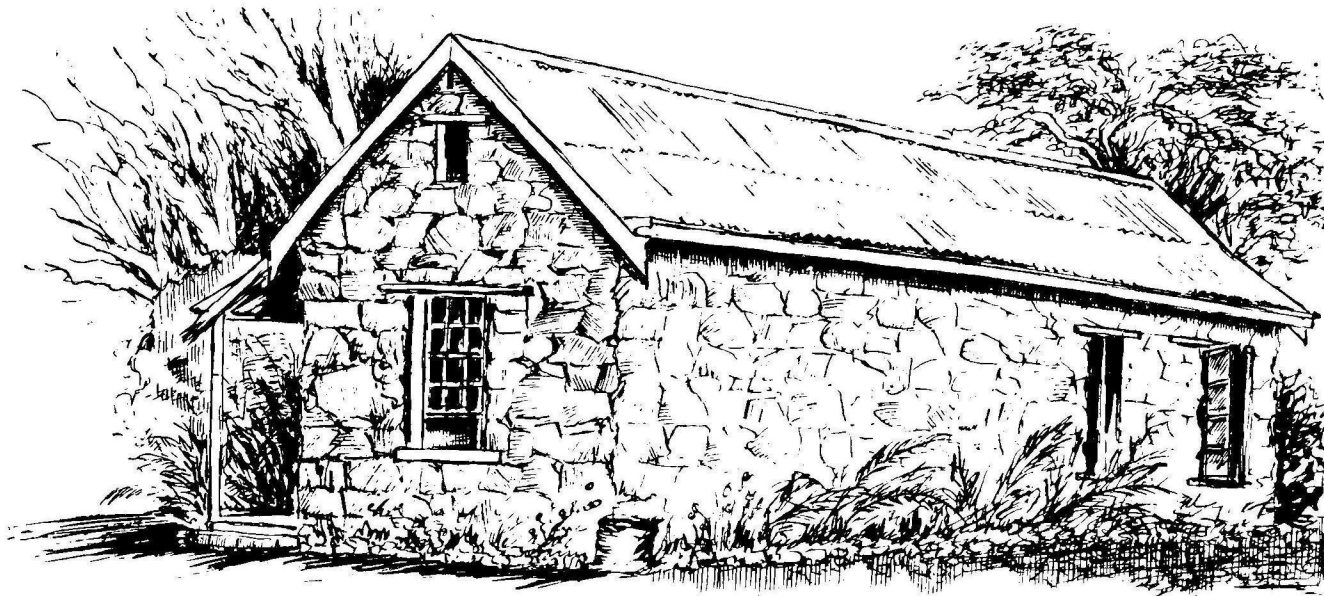
"I have built me a comfortable cottage on an eminence near the bank of the river, from whence I have a splendid prospect over water and woodland to the distant mountains, and I have an orchard already pretty well stocked with tropical and other fruits . . ." wrote Samuel Birkbeck in April 1867



to his cousin in England. The river was the Fitzroy, the mountains the Dee Range, and the home site was on Glenmore Station, about eight kilometres from Rockhampton on the northern bank of the river.

Glenmore was taken up in 1858 by pioneer squatter J. Arthur Macartney and the log cabin, still standing in 1980, was constructed by him. It has notches at intervals which enabled the occupants to protect themselves against Aboriginal attack. Even so, one of Macartney's shepherds was speared by Aborigines. Samuel Birkbeck, who bought Glenmore in 1861, came from an old English family but had been a mining engineer in Mexico for many years before migrating to Queensland. As existing accommodation on the station was insufficient for his large family, he bought a nine-room slab building which had been an inn on the road to Canoona during the gold rush, and had it re-erected as a temporary home. Before long his two Mexican employees completed the first stage of a Spanish style mansion planned as the permanent homestead. Built of local limestone and adobe, the T-shaped structure of four rooms with verandahs was the "comfortable cottage" referred to by Birkbeck, but his death a few months later meant that the mansion did not eventuate.

These three diverse structures, all built between 1858 and 1862, comprise the Old Glenmore Homestead which is still owned and cherished by the fourth generation of the Birkbeck family. The commanding view of the river is even more impressive today as it includes much of the stored water held back by the City Council Barrage to provide Rockhampton with an adequate water supply.





TRUSTEE CHAMBERS AND ROCKHAMPTON CLUB.

Trustee Chambers

The names of three gentlemen who figure prominently in the early history of Rockhampton are associated with the building now known as the Trustee Chambers. It was constructed in 1877 as the private home of Dr William Callaghan, who had established his practice in the town in 1861. The architect was John Wilson who, between 1870 and 1915, designed more than eighty buildings in the city. John Ferguson, the building contractor, was equally well known in business, civic, and political life. Ten years after Dr Callaghan's home was completed, Thomas McLaughlin built his home next door on the site formerly occupied by the Fitzroy Brewery. This dignified old building now serves as the Rockhampton Club.

Dr Callaghan's name became a byword in Rockhampton and district during his fifty years in the town. Because he was obliged to ride long distances to attend to serious accident cases and illnesses, he established a horse stud to provide the right kind of animals. His interest in horses extended to racing and he was one of the most energetic members in the early years of the Rockhampton Jockey Club. In 1897 he was elected president and later the new racecourse on the northern bank of the river was named Callaghan Park in his honour.

The house in Quay Street which was Dr Callaghan's home until his death in 1911 is one of the oldest buildings in the street to remain almost in its original form. The old kitchen, stables and hayloft still stand at the back of the building. The gracious wrought-iron balustrades on verandah and balcony, and the attractive appearance of the entire building contribute greatly to the character of Quay Street. Since 1950 the former home has been owned by the Union Trustee Company of Australia which has occupied the ground floor since July 1952. The upper floor is let as professional chambers.

A favourite evening stroll at the turn of the century was along Quay Street where, on the verandah of his gracious home, sat Dr William Callaghan who delighted in greeting the passers by. Perhaps his spirit lingers still in the building which is outwardly so unchanged despite the passing of the years.



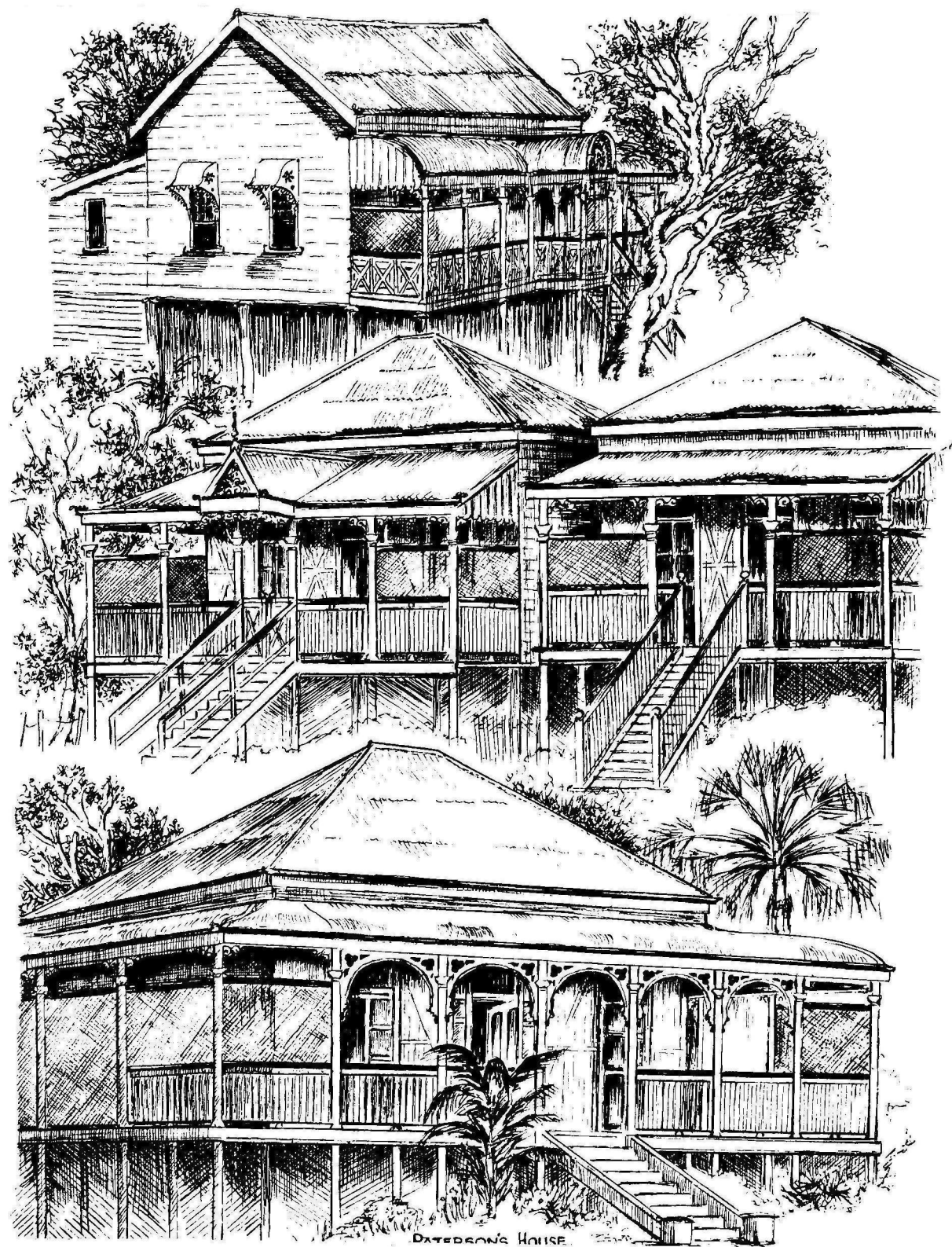
Rockhampton Grammar School

Education has always received a high priority among the public-spirited citizens of Rockhampton. This was first demonstrated in the building of the little slab and shingle school-church in 1859, and again a few years later when the need for secondary education was realized. A public meeting decided to establish a grammar school, and the first trustees were appointed in October 1878 when the town's population was a mere 6,500.

An Athelstane Range site was chosen with a superb view across the Fitzroy Valley to Mount Archer. Local architect Sidney Williams won the competition for a design for the school building and John Ferguson's tender £4,580 (\$9,160) was accepted. The Rockhampton Grammar School opened its doors to both boys and girls on 1 February 1881. John Wheatcroft, first principal, was a liberal and balanced educator who achieved excellent examination results throughout his twenty-five years at the school and, more importantly according to his philosophy, turned out boys capable of self-education through life. Miss Ina Tweedie who had been appointed lady principal became Mrs Wheatcroft at the end of the first year. The girls school was forced to close at the end of 1885 because the government would pay only one endowment for the two schools under one roof.

Many of the sound traditions established by John Wheatcroft have been carried on by such notable successors as Henry A. Kellow and Fitzroy Jardine (an old boy of the school). Several generations of some families have received their formal education at Rockhampton Grammar, a non-denominational boarding school administered by a board of trustees.

Rockhampton Grammar School turned full circle when, in 1977, it again accepted girls, but this time in a fully co-educational sense as both day students and boarders. Modern buildings now reflect new methods in education, and extra curricular activities undreamed of in the school's youth, such as flying training, but the old school building proudly symbolizes those traditions which have helped form the characters of countless boys.



DATEDSON'S HOUSE

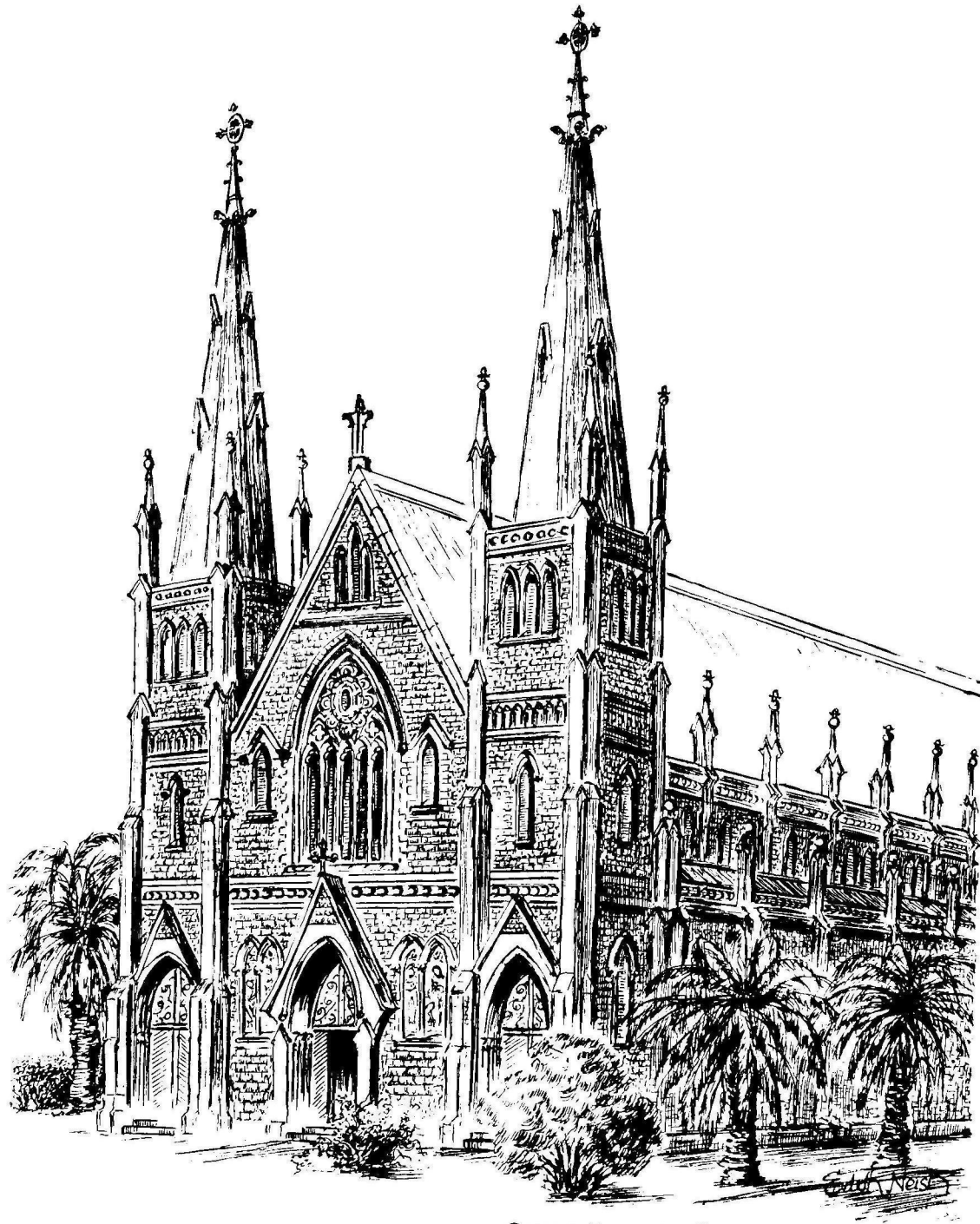
Rockhampton Houses

Pioneers' homes were constructed from whatever material was at hand and in Central Queensland this usually meant adzed timber slabs. Because Leichhardt trees were plentiful along the banks of the Fitzroy River, many early Rockhampton houses were built of this soft, easily-worked timber. When a saw mill was set up in the early 1860s, dressed timber came into use. At first the houses were built close to the ground, but by the 1890s the majority were raised on high wooden stumps. Some believe this housing fashion was imported from India, others that it grew from the necessities of climate. A high-blocked house catches the breeze, is usually above flood level and less vulnerable to mosquitoes, provides a cool retreat beneath it, and is easily inspected for white ants. Eventually, round tin plates were placed on top of the stumps to prevent white ants reaching the floor boards and stump-capping ceremonies often marked the commencement of building.

The three small cottages depicted are in Rockhampton's oldest residential area and were probably built in the 1890s as low-rental houses for workmen. The majority were constructed on the "inside out" principle with exposed studs and bracing. Verandahs, which were an integral part of the older high-blocked houses, usually had wooden lattice panels to provide protection from bright sunlight and also some privacy.

The larger house is a carefully preserved family home in which the third and fourth generations of the Paterson family now live. It was built in 1912 for Hugh Paterson, master tailor, and has five bedrooms, a large dining room and lounge separated by a wooden archway, and a kitchen with stove recess to reduce heat radiation. The single-skin walls are made from vertical tongue and groove pine boards fixed to exterior horizontal hardwood studs. Ceilings are of embossed Wunderlich and are 3.5 metres high.

These four houses are excellent examples of unspoiled Queensland vernacular architecture. While hundreds of older homes still exist in the city, the majority have the verandahs enclosed with louvres or windows which defeat the original purpose of the open design.



SAINT JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL

Saint Joseph's Cathedral

The first recorded Roman Catholic mass in Rockhampton was celebrated in the Court House in May 1862. Bishop Quinn of Brisbane had sent Father James Scully and Father Patrick Duhig to visit the frontier town to raise funds for a church which was opened in Alma Street on 4 January 1863. Father Charles Murlay, a young Frenchman, was appointed first priest and remained in Rockhampton for twenty years. During that time he was revered not only by his own flock, but by many Protestants as well. Because of his zeal and energy, both pastoral and educational, the bishop made him a dean.

Dean Murlay acquired the land in William Street on which Saint Joseph's Cathedral was to be built. He also established a substantial fund for it before leaving the town. The Right Reverend John Cani D.D., an Italian, was consecrated in Sydney on 21 May 1882 as the first bishop of Rockhampton. When he arrived at the river wharf on 9 June he was escorted to his house by a procession of people led by the town band. On the following Sunday he celebrated mass at Saint Joseph's Pro-Cathedral, the old Alma Street church.

Bishop Cani laid the foundation stone of the new cathedral in the presence of 2,000 people on Saint Patrick's Day 1895, but the building came to a halt in the following year owing to lack of funds. Bishop Cani died in 1898, and when Bishop Higgins arrived in July of the next year he found a building with only three walls and no fittings or furniture. He attacked the problem with great vigour and by using galvanized iron as a temporary wall on the east end of the stone building, Saint Joseph's Cathedral was ready for opening by Cardinal Moran on 15 October 1899. Built of local Stanwell freestone, it is a fine example of traditional European church architecture with its twin towers and stone parapets. "All that the earth can claim" of Bishop Cani now lies beneath a marble slab in the cathedral floor. His is a noble epitaph: "With reverent hands he helped to build this stately Cathedral but a nobler monument was his saintly life and tender love of the orphans."

A French priest and an Italian bishop who worked for the glory of God in nineteenth century Rockhampton left a visual symbol of their faith as well as a fine cathedral church for succeeding generations.

Lakes Creek Meat Works

The Central Queensland Meat Exporting Company Pty Ltd at Lakes Creek is one of Rockhampton's oldest industries. It began operations in June 1871 in a small cluster of buildings with a kill of eleven bullocks from Waverley Station, Saint Lawrence. The works are situated on the north bank of the Fitzroy River about seven kilometres below Rockhampton and on the creek named for the master of an early sailing vessel, Captain Lake. In September 1883 these buildings were destroyed by fire, thus depriving Lakes Creek of the honour of shipping the first cargo of frozen meat from Australia to England. Rebuilding commenced immediately, but the only survivor is part of the freezing section known as the 1884 block. Ownership of the works changed several times before they were purchased by Vestey Brothers in 1934. Expansion under this firm resulted in Lakes Creek becoming the largest export meat works in the southern hemisphere. Encouragement to cattlemen to improve their herds also helped establish Rockhampton as the beef capital of Australia.

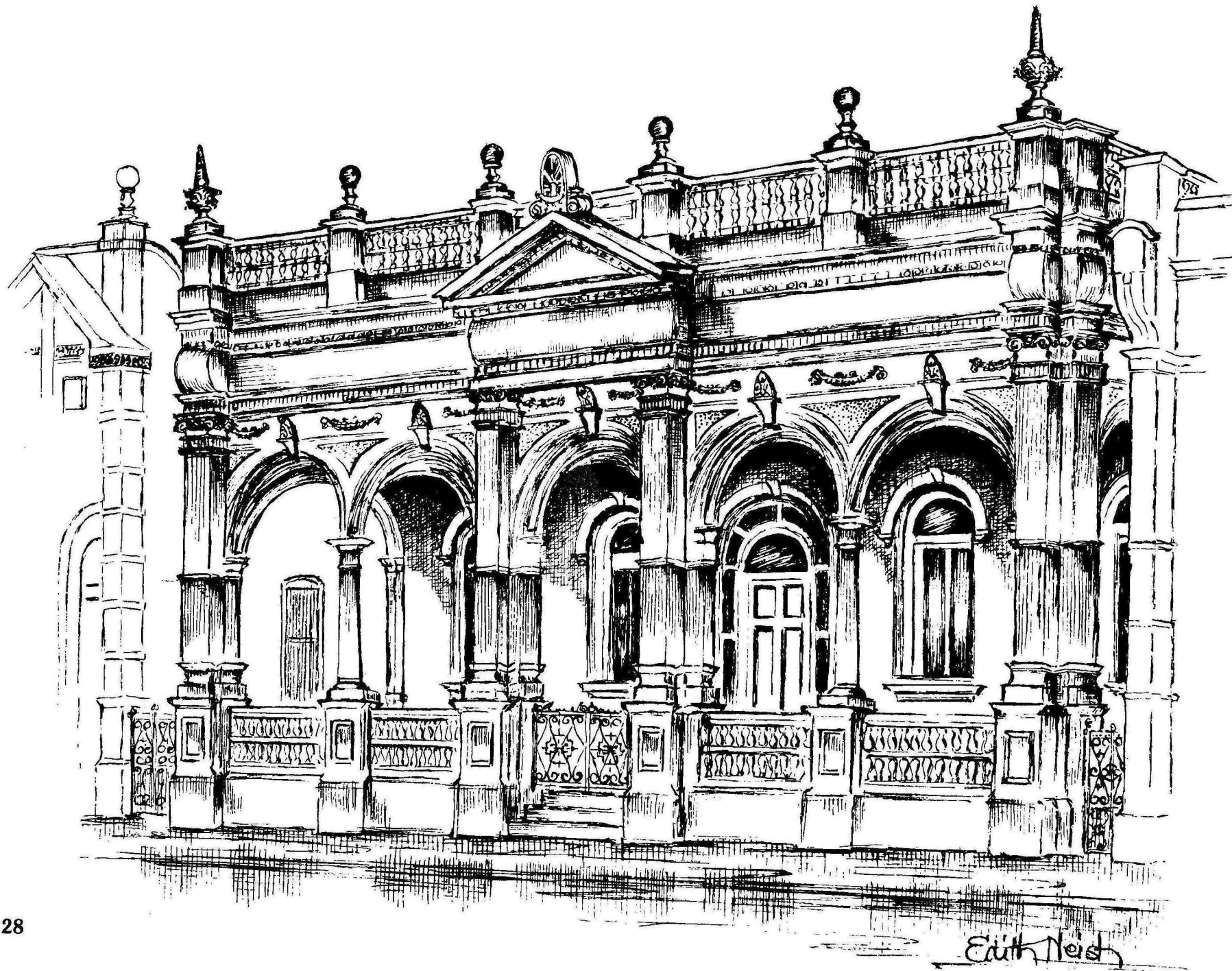


"THE VILLAGE" LAKES CREEK



Buildings have come and gone at “The Creek” according to the demands of the industry and standards of hygiene, but the substantial office block and administration centre dates from the 1890s. In the interests of modern management it has undergone many internal alterations in the post-war years, although the basic structure and roof line remain. When the roof had to be replaced on the semi-circular bay in the 1940s, the art of hand-corrugating to fit the curves had been lost and so flat iron was used. Unfortunately, in recent exterior modifications the spacious verandahs with their simple wooden railings and lattice panels have been enclosed with wall board.

Lakes Creek has a long tradition of caring for its employees. Very early in its history the company began building cottages which it let for low rentals. When a new baby arrived in the tenant’s family, company carpenters would add another bedroom and the weekly rent would be increased by three pence. Ultimately there were sixty-two cottages, but by 1978 these had been reduced to thirty-six. In the past Lakes Creek was more than an industry, it was a self-contained community with its own social organizations, sporting clubs, ambulance brigade, fire brigade, and brass band. The annual picnic was a family affair with special trains to Emu Park and plenty of meat from the works for the thousands of sandwiches. Some senior employees now look back with nostalgia to the days of lower wages but warmer human relations.

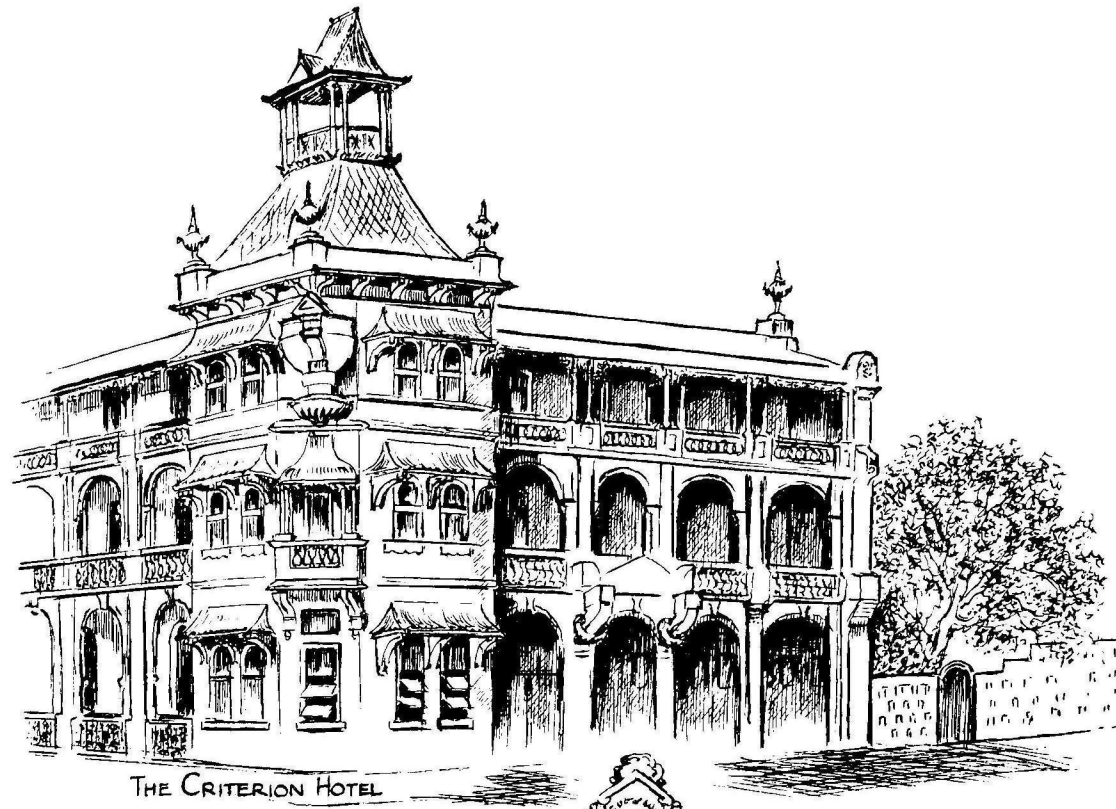


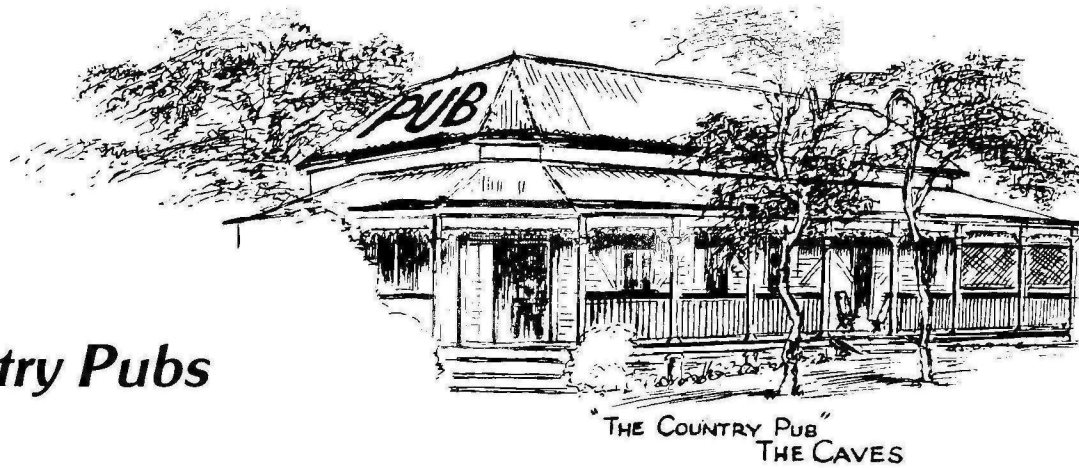
Australian Broadcasting Commission

The classic-styled building in Quay Street which the Australian Broadcasting Commission has occupied since 1963 was erected before the turn of the century by the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited. It overlooks the Fitzroy River, which from 1855 to 1903 was the chief communications link between Rockhampton and the outside world. Quay Street formed the nucleus of settlement and within a few years a busy river port was established beside it. Gold was prominent among early exports, but it was the renowned Mount Morgan Mine which had the most significant effect on Rockhampton in general and Quay Street in particular. Fine banks and mercantile offices were erected, many of them overlooking the river and its substantial wharves. Mining operations commenced in 1882, but it was several years before Rockhampton realized the extent of the wealth on its doorstep and Mount Morgan became famous as the richest single gold mine in the world.

In 1897 the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company decided to build its own office in Quay Street and to incorporate a board-room and also vaults for the storage of gold awaiting shipment. Despite the vast wealth of the mine, the directors chose a comparatively simple style for the single-storey building of concrete-rendered brickwork. Its character lies in the arcaded verandah with granite columns and stone balustrades. The ornamental stone work is repeated on the parapet which effectively conceals the iron roof. The overall impression created by the building is one of classic simplicity and elegance which has remained unspoiled by the passing years.

It is fitting that the Australian Broadcasting Commission should now occupy a building in the street which was intimately associated with early communications.



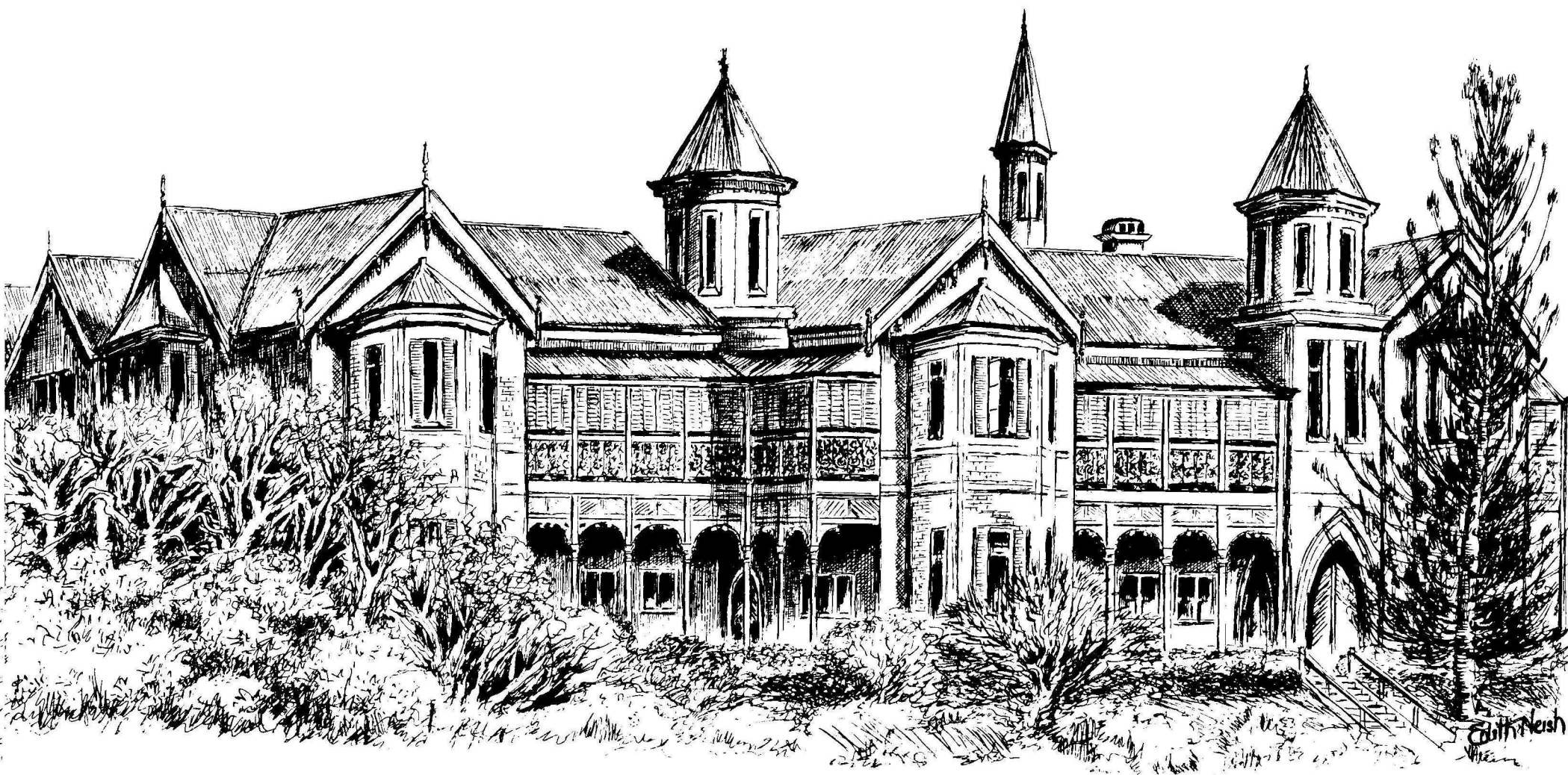


Town and Country Pubs

Soon after the future city of Rockhampton received its name in 1856 it acquired its first public house—the Bush Inn. This was described by its owners, Parker and Gannon, as being of slab and weatherboard with a roof of shingles. It stood on the site of the present Criterion Hotel on the corner of Quay and Fitzroy Streets and in 1862 was enlarged and renamed the Criterion. Mrs G. S. Curtis, Richard Parker's daughter, had the present fine three-storey hotel designed by James Flint and built in 1889. It was owned by Parker's descendants until purchased by the Smith family in 1946, so in more than one hundred and twenty years the Criterion has had only two family ownerships.

Another Quay Street hotel, now Heritage Tavern, occupies a site on the corner of William Street on which the Golden Fleece Hotel was built in 1859. The present building was designed by John Wilson for Mrs Leah Johnson who opened it in 1898 as the Commercial Hotel. As its name implies, it incorporated sample rooms for commercial travellers, but for decades it was also a favourite hostelry for country people. Architecturally it is an important example of Australian vernacular with attractive iron lace which was cast by Burns and Twigg, an old local foundry still in existence.

The Country Pub is the registered name of the hotel at The Caves township on the Bruce Highway, about twenty-three kilometres north of Rockhampton. Its history is intimately associated with the discovery in 1882 of the now famous Olsen's Caves. In the early days when Rockhampton people flocked to the caves in buggies and on horseback, the track passed the Olsen home and went on through the bush to the caves. As visitors turned up any hour of the day or night, the Olsen brothers decided to build an inn on the main road to cater for overnight visitors. It was a successful venture and also became a staging post for northern coaches. First licensed in 1908, the hotel was moved about one kilometre to the township in the early 1930s. It still retains much of the charm of an unsophisticated country pub—as its name implies.



Rockhampton Girls Grammar School

“Not only for school, but for life we are learning”, is a translation of the Latin motto adopted in 1894 by Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. This was essentially the philosophy of Helen E. Downs, first headmistress of the school, 1892–1906. Miss Downs was far in advance of the accepted educational policies of her day in advocating a liberal education for girls. Proud of the school’s one hundred per cent pass in the University of Sydney junior examinations of 1897, she nevertheless told parents that the upper forms were not merely for examination candidates, but for training cultured women who would not waste their gifts in pettiness due to ignorance and lack of interest in “the larger world of thought”. The ideals which Helen Downs established have become an integral part of the school spirit. Outstanding headmistresses of this century who have also woven their own talents into the fabric of school life include Miss Margaret Smith (1925–48) and an old girl of the Grammar School, Miss Millicent Jackson (1958–70).

When the trustees of Rockhampton Grammar School announced the closure of the girls department at the end of 1885, no time was lost in forming a subscription list for a new school. The prime site on Athelstane Range was not approved by everyone. One critic believed the high position would cause colds and sore throats, while the glare at such a height would be “pernicious to the eyesight”. In 1890 a competition for architectural designs was held and of the forty submitted the winner was an unknown student architect of Brisbane, E. M. Hockings, who later practised in Rockhampton. The Girls Grammar opened its doors to the first four boarders and thirty-three day girls on 11 March 1892. It can now accommodate two hundred boarders and the same number of day students. Among new buildings, the largest single addition is the Millicent Jackson House comprising gymnasium, classrooms, and boarding accommodation.

On 29 April 1892, Arbor Day, forty-six trees were planted in the school grounds, one for each pupil, mistress and trustee. Today the fine grove of jacarandas, pines and other trees almost hide the old school building, but they remain as living symbols of Helen Downs’ philosophy that education is not just for school, but for life.

Gentlemen's Residences

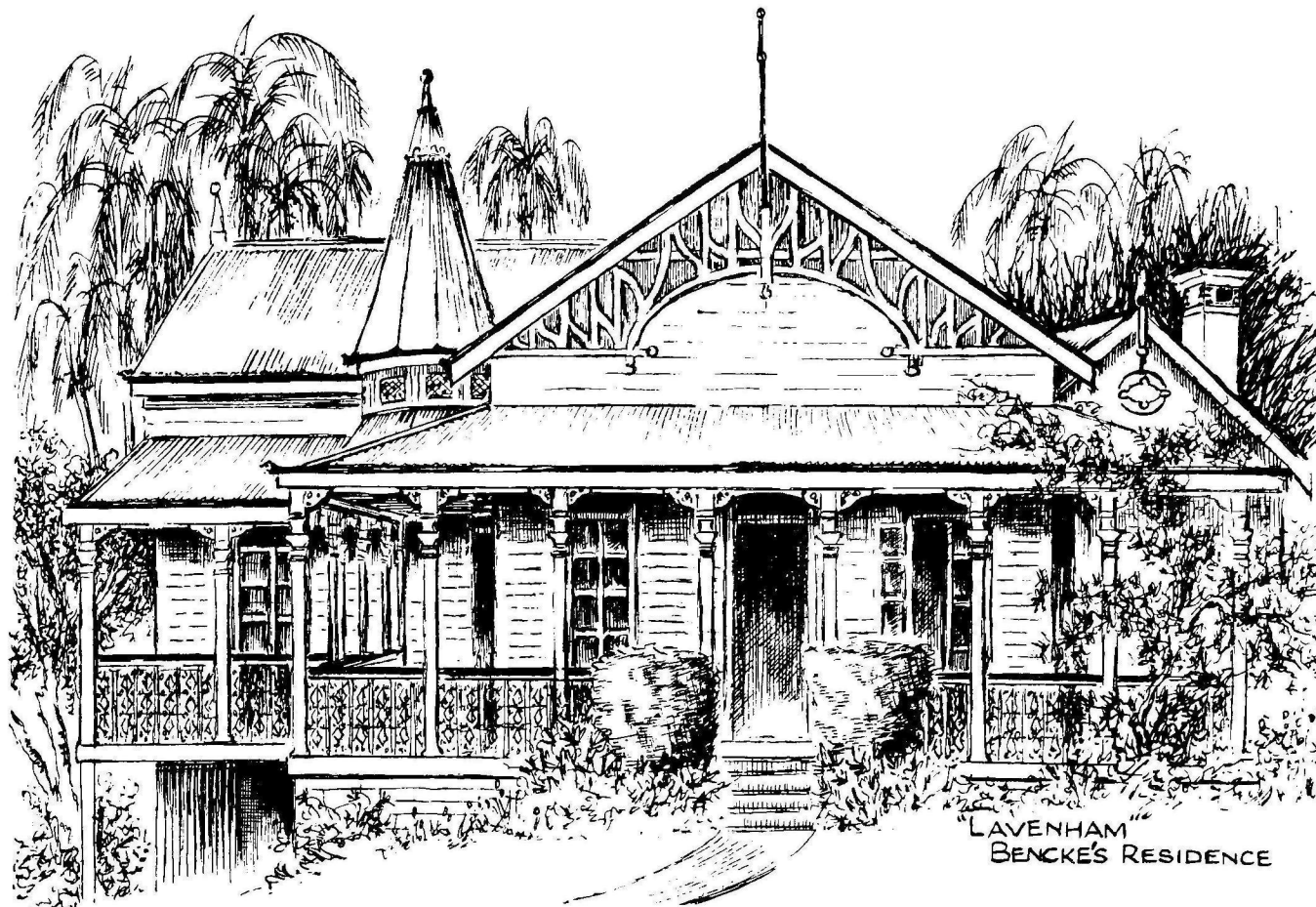
Very early in its history Rockhampton showed class consciousness in advertisements for housing: there were two kinds, cottages and gentlemen's residences. The cottages were usually in the older streets close to the business centre, while more often than not the address of a gentleman's residence was The Range. This abbreviation is still used for Athelstane Range on the western side of the city, a name derived from Mount Athelstane which was the home of W. H. Wiseman who built the first gentleman's residence in Rockhampton.

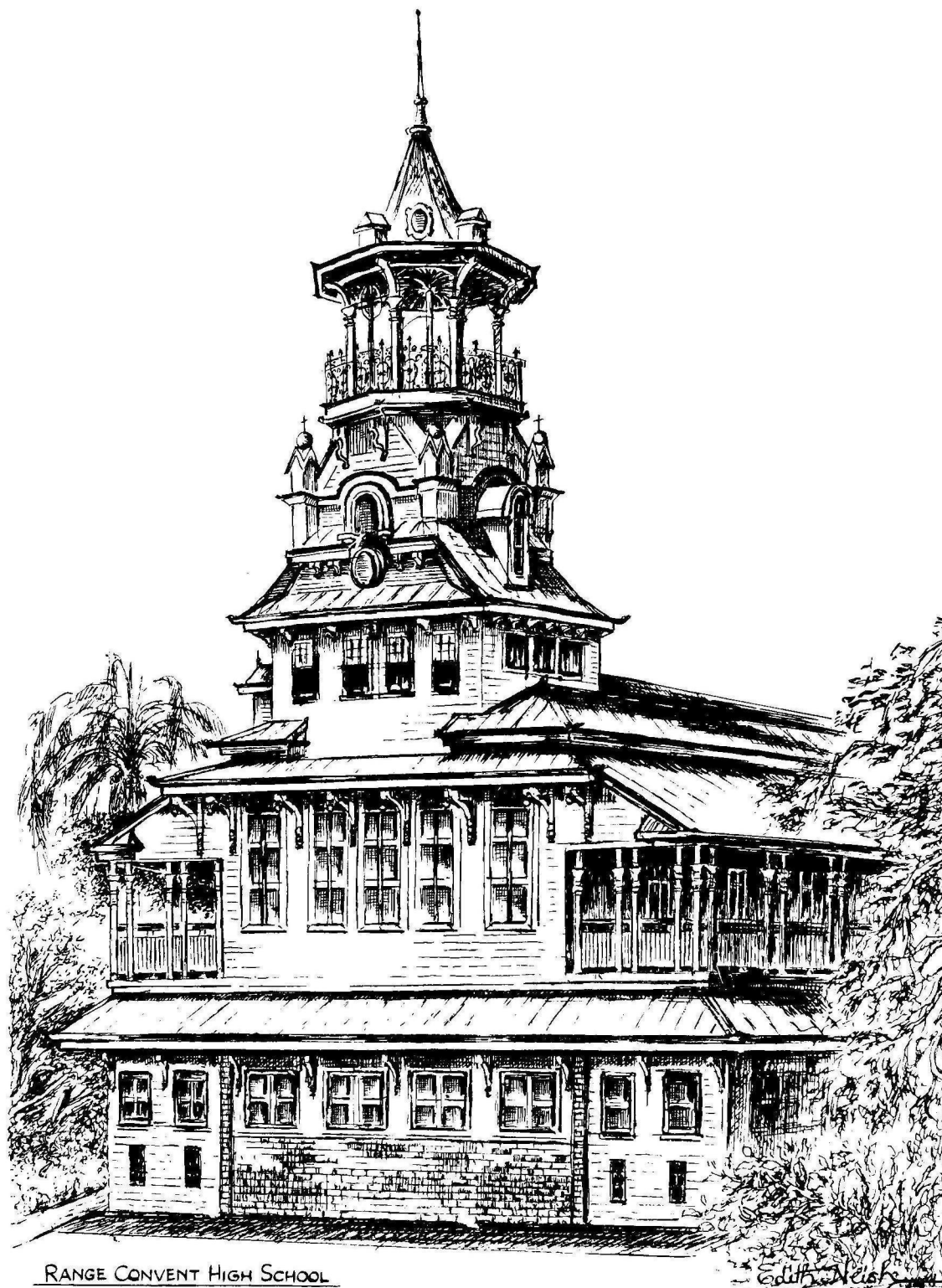
Bencke's and Boland's homes, *Lavenham* and *Killowen*, though quite different in design, typify villa residences erected on the Range in the late 1880s and 1890s. *Killowen*, in Ward Street, was built for Robert Cecil Boland about 1898 and has remained in the family ever since. Boland was a solicitor who came to Rockhampton in 1893 as a partner in the old legal firm of Rees R. & Sydney Jones. By the time *Killowen* was completed, he was chairman of the Rockhampton Jockey Club and also



prominent in other aspects of business and public life. In the early 1920s the home was extended and the deep shady verandahs continued right around the house.

The home in Caroline Street now owned by Thomas Bencke, an alderman of the Rockhampton City Council, was built for Herbert Williams, of Williams Ltd, in about 1884 and named *Stanleigh*. At a later date, probably when the Williams children became young adults, the house was enlarged and a ballroom 7.5 metres by 4.5 metres was added. A distinctive hollow turret disguises an awkward roofing join between the original part of the house and the ballroom, but harmonizes perfectly with the ornamental woodwork and iron lace which give character to the house. Williams' son, Stanley, later owned the home and his children grew up there, but it was sold in the mid-1940s. The present owners bought the old home in 1948 and renamed it *Lavenham* for family reasons. Over the years they have landscaped the garden, not merely to complement the gracious old home but also to create a place of peace and beauty amid shady trees and flowering shrubs.





RANGE CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL

Edith A. Nish

Range Convent High School

“The finest wooden building in Central Queensland”, said Bishop Duhig when he blessed and opened the new Convent High School for the Sisters of Mercy on 8 December 1907. More than seventy years later a visiting Melbourne architect commented: “The tower itself is indeed an architectural gem—incorporating oriental and baroque styles in a Victorian building in a unique and delicate manner.” Although the school was designed by C. Slater and erected under his supervision, the ideas and the inspiration came from Bishop Duhig himself, especially for the tower with its open observation platform beneath a lantern canopy festooned with delicate iron lace.

For the Sisters of Mercy, the opening in 1907 of their modern high school with its large hall, library, ten music rooms, photography room, domestic science kitchen and “university classroom” was the climax of thirty-four years’ work. They had come to Rockhampton in 1873 at the invitation of Dean Murlay, first parish priest of the Roman Catholic Church in the town. In preparation for their arrival he bought Dr William Callaghan’s home in Kent Street, where Saint Brigid’s Convent and Hostel now stand. The Sisters at first taught only primary school children, but soon were able to establish a high school at their “little limestone convent” and also board a few country girls. Dean Murlay likewise founded a school for boys in West Street which was staffed by lay teachers for twenty years before the Christian Brothers opened their school in the same building on 2 July 1894.

In 1895 Bishop Cani presented the Sisters with *Stoneleigh*, his residence on a glorious site on the crest of Athelstane Range. He named it the Convent and School of Our Lady of Good Counsel, but over the years it has become known as the Range Convent High. With new classrooms and boarding accommodation the school can now take six hundred girls, but the old school tower, like a spire pointing to heaven, remains as a symbol of the spiritual values which are an integral part of education at the Range Convent High School.



Walter Reid Building

Rockhampton was the headquarters until recently of the city's oldest mercantile firm trading under its original name, Walter Reid & Company. Walter Reid was a dapper Scotsman who established the business in the 1860s and then after rapid expansion sold it in 1881 for a large sum to McIlwraith McEachern. Under the outstanding management of W. H. Rudd the wholesale firm became one of the state's leading businesses and in 1899 work began on a three-storey warehouse designed by local architects Hutton and Hockings in classical Greek revival style. Erected on the site of Edward Foreman's first grocery store on the corner of East and Derby streets, the solid cement-rendered walls are up to four bricks thick. Strengthened by interior uprights and cross-beams of adzed tree trunks and originally fitted with a powerful steamlift, the building stored thousands of bales of western wool.

Reids moved their head office to Brisbane in 1975 and the Rockhampton City Council purchased the old warehouse for \$120,000. After spending another \$380,000 on its restoration, including fire proofing, the unique centre was given to the people of Rockhampton for cultural activities. Such diverse groups as Little Theatre, Spinners and Weavers, Lapidary, Potters, Art Society, Chamber Music, and Youth Orchestra now have their own workshops, studios and galleries rent free. Each group is required to instruct the young in its particular skills. The Photographic Society not only has a darkroom and studio for this purpose, but also a photographic museum which helps create an awareness of the past.

The Walter Reid Centre illustrates how changing needs in the community can be served through existing buildings which are part of our history.



Customs House

The Customs House which stands so majestically in Quay Street has been described as one of the best government buildings in Australia. Some people find it strange that such a building should exist in a city which is no longer a river port; not only was it justified at the time of building and for many years after, but it still has relevance to its total environment.

When the Customs House was completed in 1901, replacing an earlier structure, Rockhampton was a major Queensland port. The town wharves on the Fitzroy River (a major river system on the east coast of Australia) were constantly astir with regular passenger and cargo transport, some of it direct from Britain. Rockhampton, the unofficial capital of Central Queensland, was entirely dependent upon sea and river transport for intrastate and interstate services until the rail connection with Brisbane was completed in 1903, and with Mackay to the north in 1921. Exports from Rockhampton were always more significant than imports and at times exceeded those of Brisbane. As well as huge consignments of wool from the Central West, large tonnages of frozen beef, hides, and tallow from the Lakes Creek Meat Works passed through the port. Gold and copper from Mount Morgan vied with wool as the most valuable export commodity.

In August 1898 the Department of Public Works accepted a tender of £16,534 (\$33,000) to build the present Customs House. It was designed by the government architect as a graceful domed building of local sandstone and cement-rendered brickwork, with Corinthian columns supporting a curved portico. The craftsmen who carved the Corinthian capitals on the columns were especially brought from England for the purpose.

Although the river trade has vanished the city of Rockhampton remains the commercial centre of a region whose wealth is still based on primary production and the mining industry. Quay Street itself continues as a thriving business centre, not a museum piece. The Customs House, too, has a continuing role as government offices.

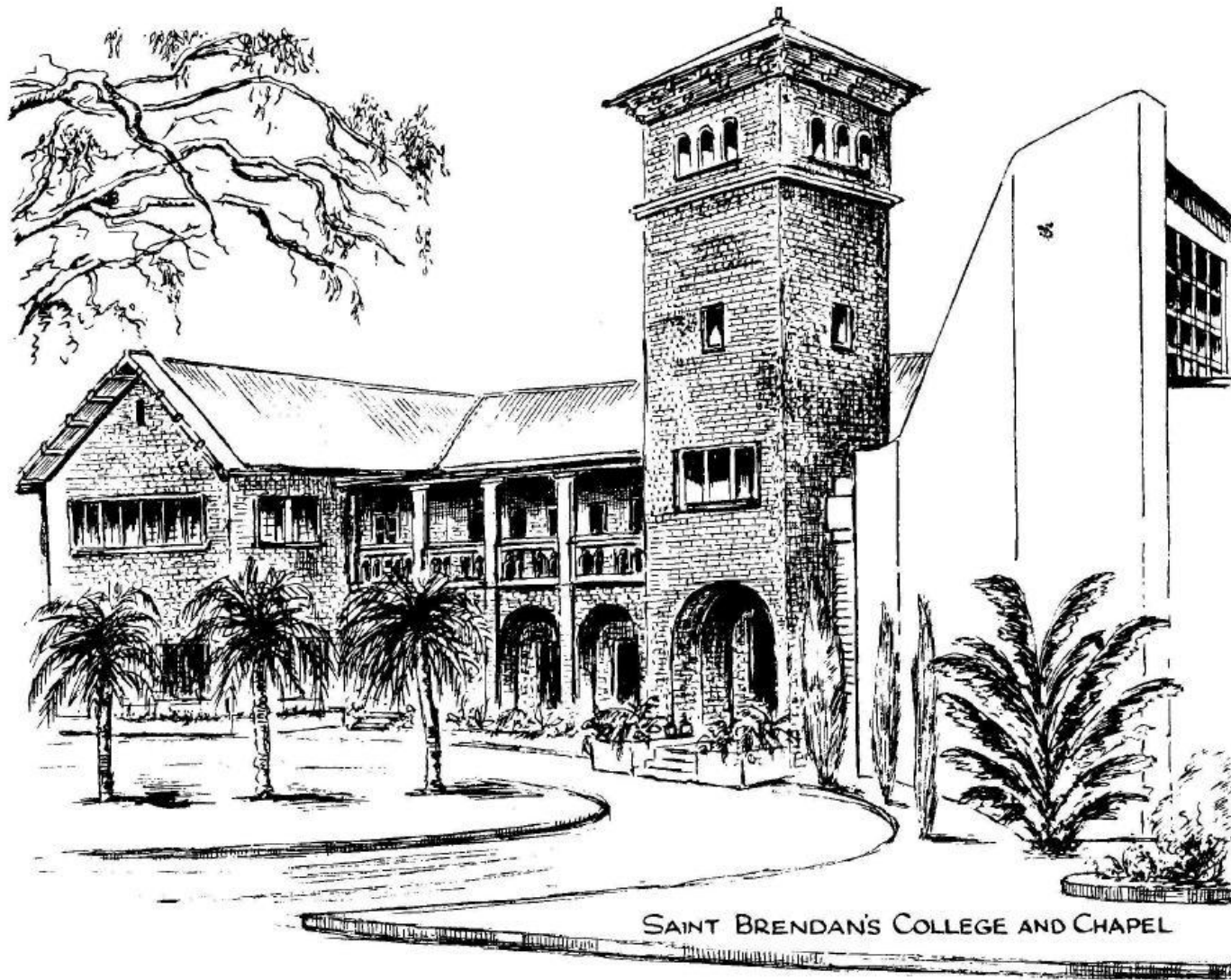
Yeppoon Boarding Schools

Saint Ursula's and Saint Brendan's colleges at Yeppoon on the Capricorn Coast, near Rockhampton, are not only ideally situated, but also provide excellent academic and sporting facilities for Catholic girls and boys from remote areas. Although not nearly as old as the three Rockhampton boarding schools, each has that indefinable spirit which characterizes a good school.

Few Irish families settled at Yeppoon in the early days so there was no parish church there when the Presentation Sisters founded Saint Ursula's Convent and School in January 1917. With their Mother House at Longreach the Sisters had need of a coastal retreat, so Bishop Shiel suggested that a convent and boarding school would fulfil a dual purpose. For ten years the schoolrooms on the ground floor served as a church on Sundays, with a priest travelling from North Rockhampton to celebrate mass. From its small beginning, with one three-storey building (delightfully Queensland vernacular in design) to meet the combined needs of convent, boarding school, classrooms, and church, Saint Ursula's College has become a modern school with science block and library as well as new classrooms and dormitories.



SAINT URSULA'S COLLEGE



In a glorious bush setting among the hills behind Yeppoon stands Saint Brendan's College founded by the Christian Brothers in 1940. The property, Coplands, comprises 142 hectares and was acquired by Bishop Duhig of Rockhampton in 1911 with the intention of establishing a boys boarding school. Enrolment has increased from 57 in the first year to 325 boarders and 45 day boys in 1978. A long crescent of buildings now top the ridge, overlooking playing fields on one side and a gully with unspoiled natural bush on the other.



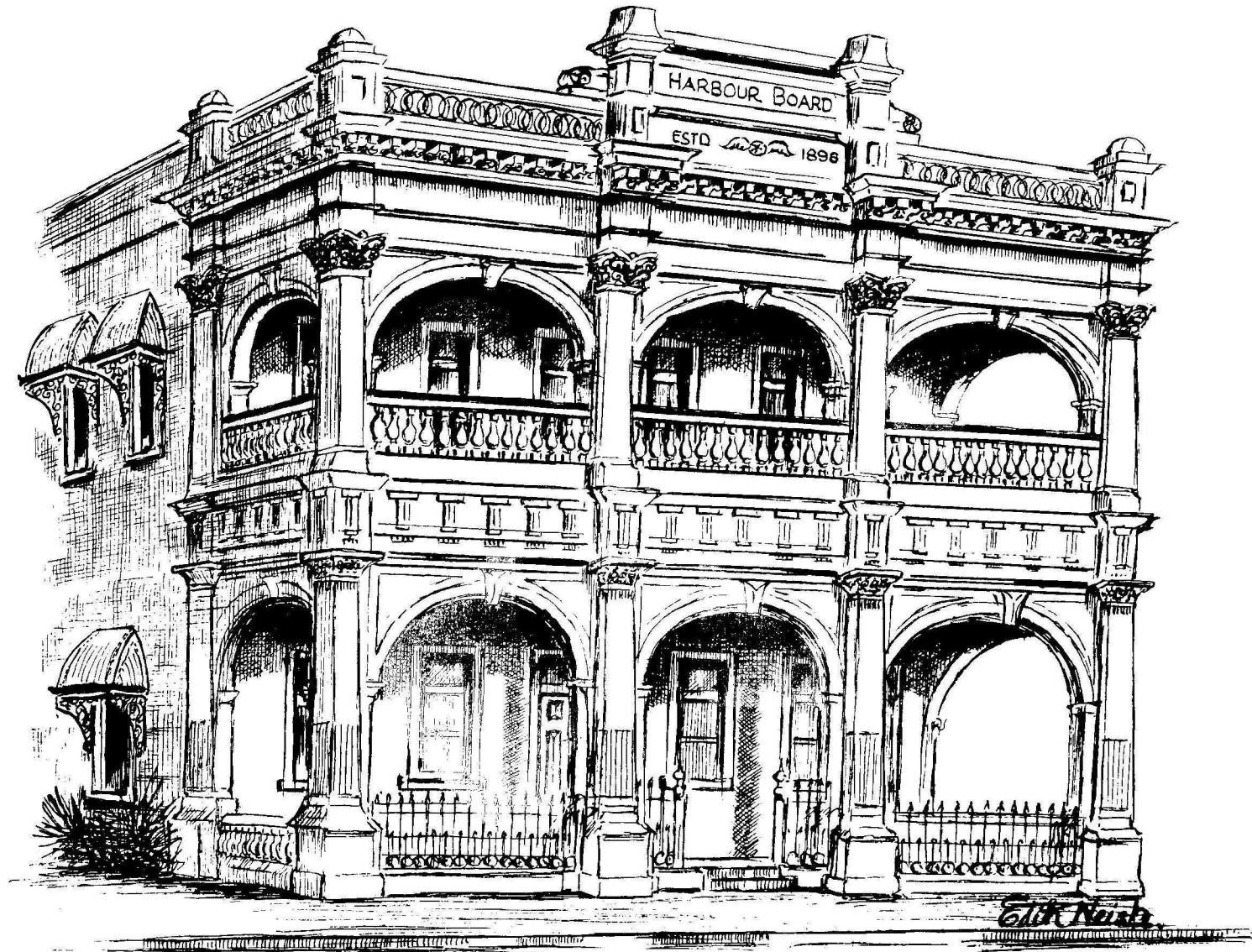
Yungaba Migrant Hostel

An immigrant who arrived in Rockhampton by sailing ship in the 1870s described the Immigration Depot as more like horse-stalls than human habitation. Today's sponsored migrant could say, with equal truth, that his temporary home resembles a colonial mansion rather than a migrant hostel.

The first immigrants to sail direct from Britain to the Port of Rockhampton arrived in the *Eutopia* in November 1862 to find that the depot in East Lane was far from perfection. New barracks were later built at Depot Hill (which accounts for the name of one of Rockhampton's oldest suburbs), then in Victoria Parade and, finally, in North Street in the 1880s. By that time the great waves of immigration had slowed to a trickle and the new home was so seldom used that it was demolished in 1931.

After the Second World War when Australia again needed large numbers of migrants, the Queensland government purchased one of the most gracious older Rockhampton homes as a hostel for sponsored migrants. *McRich*, originally named Killin, was a house designed by architects Eaton & Bates and built by pioneer building contractor, John Ferguson, for his daughter and her husband, solicitor Sydney Jones. Like all gentlemen's residences of its day, *McRich* was set in large grounds which included stables and a coach-house. Then in 1895 Bishop Cani, first Roman Catholic Bishop of Rockhampton, moved from his old stone house on the crest of the Range to *McRich* in Ward Street. A chapel with stained glass windows was later added to the house.

McRich became a family home in 1922 when it was bought by Hugh Grant, a solicitor whose roots reached down into Rockhampton's early years. The garden was landscaped to give it much of its present character, and the spacious rooms and large promenade deck (now demolished) on the top of the house resounded with the music and laughter of private dances which were part of the social life of the times. In 1942 it was requisitioned by the United States Army as headquarters for Lieutenant General Eichelberger, Corps Commander, and was then owned for a time by the McLean family. Finally, as Yungaba Migrant Hostel, it opened its doors to men, women, and children from many countries who came to establish their own homes in Central Queensland.



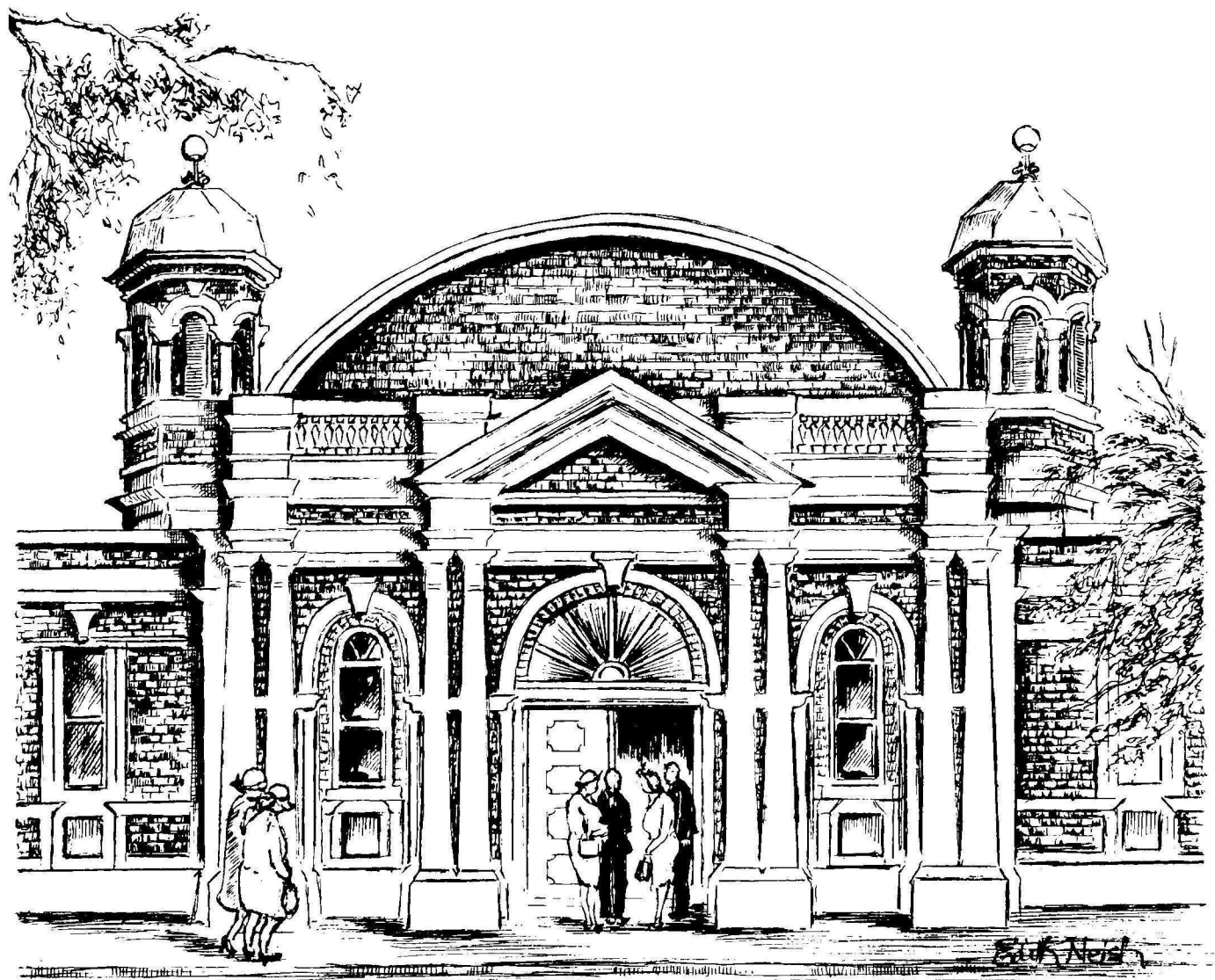
FITZROY SHIRE OFFICE

Fitzroy Shire Office

In the dignified manner of a well-bred Victorian lady, the former Harbour Board Office looks serenely upon the river whose life is so changed since the days of its youth at the turn of the century. Now it can look to the future as well as the past, for since 1977 the old building has a new purpose in local government as the headquarters of the Fitzroy Shire. Each of these local authorities springs from an older one: the Rockhampton Harbour Board was established in 1895 to take over port administration from the Harbours and Rivers Department, while the Fitzroy Shire Council was one of the two offspring of the Gogango Divisional Board established in 1879.

Rockhampton was proclaimed a Port of Entry in 1858 following the influx of gold seekers to Canoona. There was to be one recurring problem—keeping the river channel clear of shifting sand banks. For decades overseas shipping had to anchor in Keppel Bay and tranship passengers and cargo into small river steamers and lighters. However a deep-water wharf was an urgent necessity, but when one was built at Port Alma in 1884 it had no land connection with Rockhampton until a railway was constructed in 1912. Meantime a second deep-water port had been established at Broadmount on the northern side of the Fitzroy, connected to Rockhampton by rail in 1898 and abandoned in 1911.

Fitzroy Shire includes Port Alma within its boundaries, thus providing a link with the Harbour board. The old building in Quay Street which has become the Shire's new administration centre was well planned by pioneer architect, John Wilson, to suit the climate, with its solid exterior pleasantly shaded by the stone arched verandah and balcony; this was the first upstairs concrete verandah in Rockhampton. In adapting the old building, the Shire Council made no structural alterations and so allowed it to retain its natural dignity and pleasant appearance. It served the Harbour Board for eighty years and seems likely to do the same for the Fitzroy Shire.



SCHOTIA PLACE

Schotia Place

Some cities take pleasure in demolishing old buildings which have outlived their original purpose. Rockhampton has a better plan: it restores them if possible and gives them a new function in the life of the city. Schotia Place, named for the exotic flowering trees which attract noisy flocks of mountain parrots in the springtime, illustrates the wisdom of this policy. The building itself, with curved roof, twin turrets, and elaborate facade, resembles an eastern market and was, in fact, the City Market to which farmers brought their produce at the turn of the century. On declaring the building open in April 1899, the governor of Queensland commented that even Brisbane did not have a retail market building. Seven years later, stall holders protested to the council about the building being let to visiting entertainers during Carnival Week; they said it could not be a market and music hall at the same time. In succeeding decades it served more mundane needs for the Electricity Supply and the PMG Department.

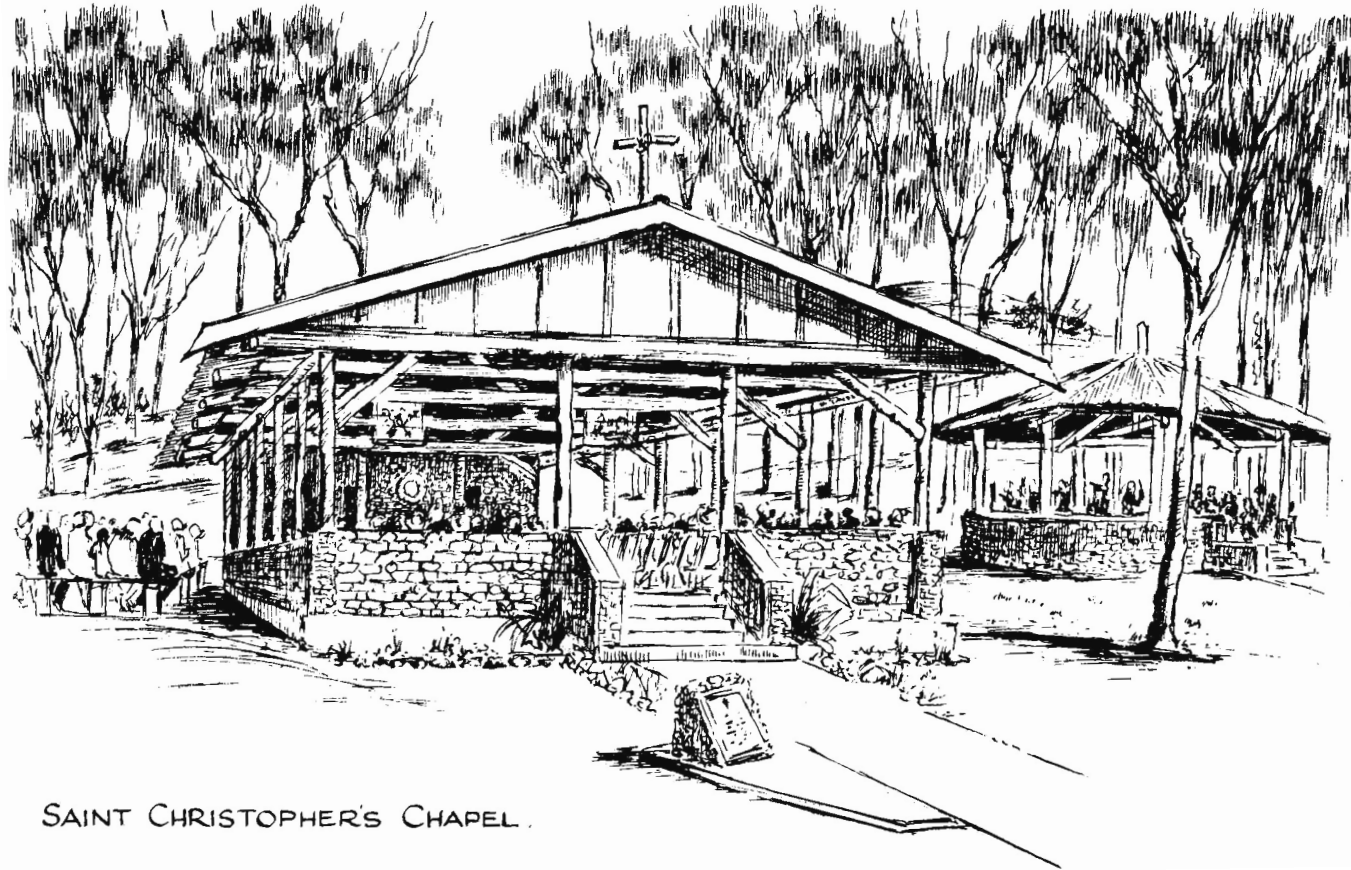
In 1974 the City Council renovated and restored the old building without altering its original character, named it Schotia Place, and gave it to the Senior Citizens as a community centre. Adjoining the building is a pleasant grassy square, also part of the Market Reserve. This was the site of the old enclosed City Baths which were built in 1883 and served Rockhampton for more than half a century before being replaced by an Olympic Pool. At the time of their opening, a local paper commented that there was no longer any excuse for the youth of the town to bathe in the river, exposing themselves indecently and running the risk of an attack by shark or alligator.

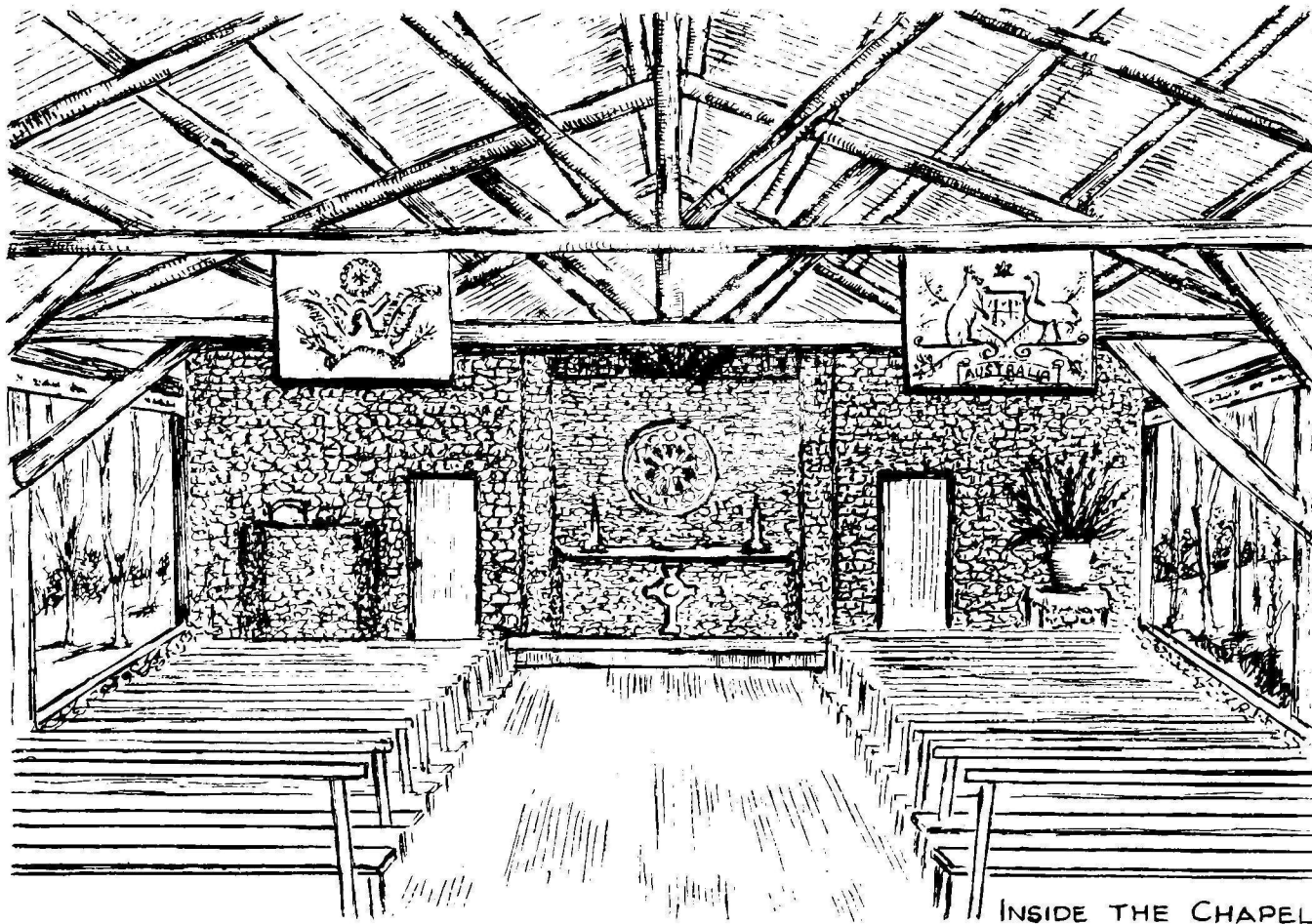
Schotia Place with its memories of the past is an ideal social and recreation centre for the elderly. Not only is it a building with soul and character, but it also incorporates a large hall which is light and airy, a stage, and several anterooms. Each day of the week men and women gather there for social activities, with one day set aside for the handicapped. Hairdressers and a chiropodist provide services. Altogether it is a happy place in which the sounds of music and laughter are often heard, echoing its earlier use as a music hall.

Saint Christopher's Chapel

An open-air chapel built at Nerimbera, near Rockhampton, by American servicemen based in the area during the Second World War, is said to be the only one of its kind in the world. Most of the materials used in Saint Christopher's were gathered from the surrounding countryside: the roof trusses and supporting posts are round bush timber, the partial walls consist of natural stones, while the altar is made of water-worn stones set in cement. Two Protestant chaplains, a Roman Catholic padre, and a Jewish rabbi supervised the work which was carried out by men of the 542 Engineers Ship and Shore Battalion. The chapel was consecrated late in 1943 and non-denominational services held in it throughout the American "occupation" which, during its peak period, involved seventy thousand men.

After the United States troops left there was a gradual deterioration in the building until Henry Beak, whose grazing property adjoins the chapel, began to take care of it. The Rockhampton City Council

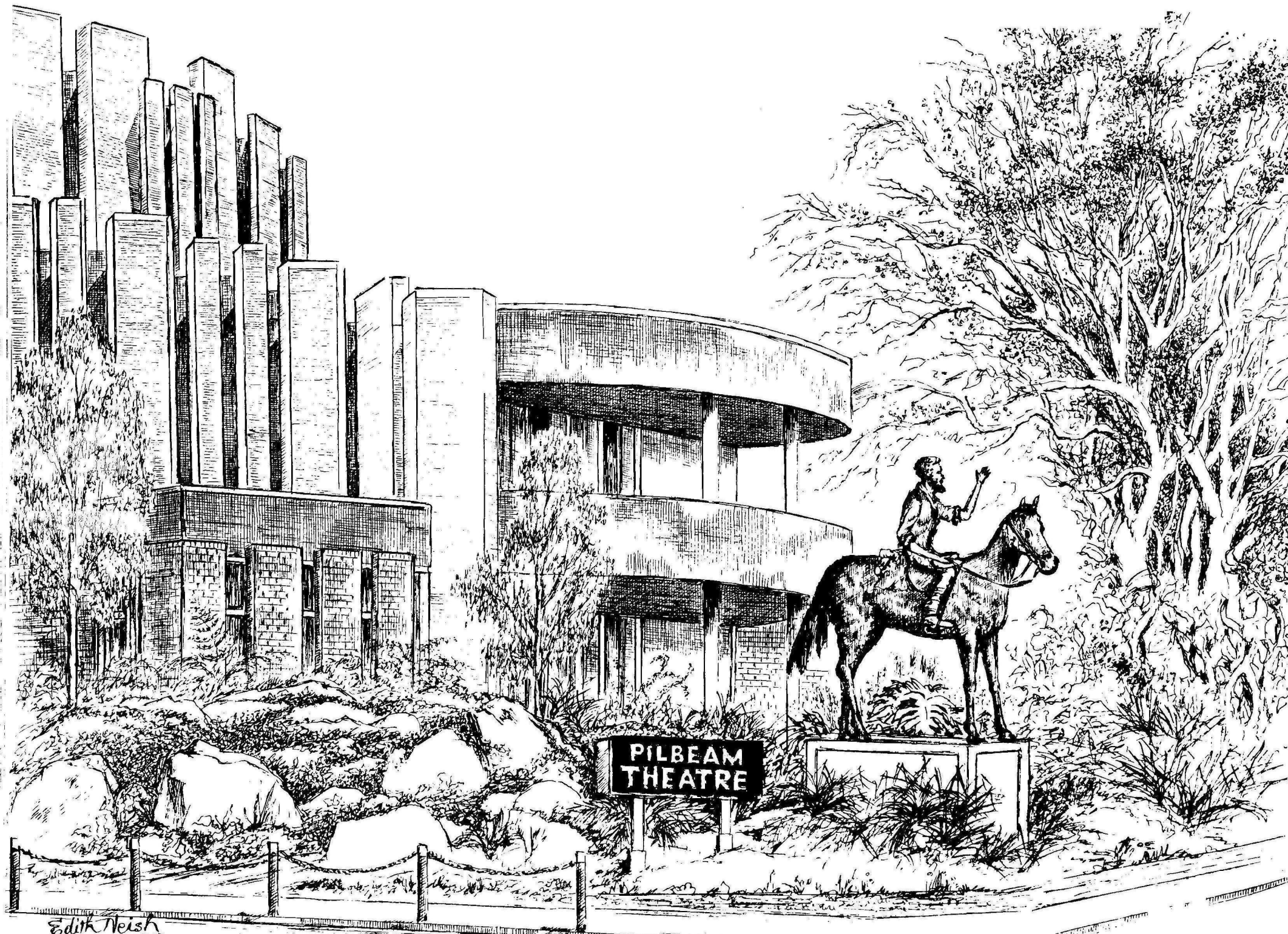




INSIDE THE CHAPEL

and the Livingstone Shire Council then assumed temporary responsibility and in 1959 a combined committee of the Returned Soldiers' League and the American 41st Division Association was formed to ensure the chapel's preservation. A memorial fence has been erected and gates donated by the Rockhampton branch of the RSSILA and the Beak family. The main gates feature the USA and Australian Coats of Arms. In memory of an American veteran who in 1958 inspired his comrades of the 41st Division to raise money for Saint Christopher's, a band rotunda has been erected. The chapel's uniqueness is evident in many respects, not least by the timber planks fixed inside the building which carry the names and ranks of winners of athletic events at the nearby war-time sports oval.

Saint Christopher, patron of travellers, has lent his name to a simple church which is truly part of the landscape. Battle-weary soldiers no longer seek peace there, but they will not be forgotten while the chapel remains.



PILBEAM
THEATRE

Edith Neish

Charles Archer on Sleipner

The bronze sculpture (by Arthur Murch) of Charles Archer on his favourite horse, Sleipner, which graces the forecourt of the city's newest cultural buildings, perfectly symbolizes the relationship between the old and the new in Rockhampton. Near this site on the southern bank of the Fitzroy River, on 1 September 1855, Charles Archer raised his arm in welcome to his brother Colin who had just rounded the bend of the river in the ketch *Ellida*. Charles and his overland party had reached Gracemere three weeks earlier and now, on this first day of spring, eagerly awaited the future port's first cargo. This occasion was most significant in the founding of Rockhampton.

Charles Archer's salute to his brother was also a salute to the future of the city. Each generation since has confirmed its faith in Rockhampton and district through the building of fine homes, schools, cathedrals and public and commercial buildings. Today's generation, like Charles Archer, salutes the future through the medium of the majestic Pilbeam Theatre for the performing arts and the adjoining Rockhampton Gallery with its outstanding collection of creative works.

